TRENDSJOURNAL.COM | FORECASTING SINCE 1980 | 27 JUNE 2023

# THE TRENDS JOURNAL®

HISTORY BEFORE IT HAPPENS®

## KING JAMES'S BIBLE GOT IT WRONG:

# THE MEEK SHALL INHERIT THE EARTH

TRENDS JOURNAL
HISTORY BEFORE IT HAPPENS®

27 June 2023

*PUBLISHER*
**GERALD CELENTE**

*EXECUTIVE EDITOR*
***EDMUND DeMARCHE***

*EDITOR*
**AMY BYRNE**

*CONTRIBUTING WRITERS*
**GREGORY MANNARINO**
**GARY NULL**
**RICHARD GALE**
**BEN DAVISS**
**JOE DORAN**

How to read the Trends Journal on Kindle devices

Suggested "Text Aloud" pdf readers:
– for android phones search "Voice Aloud Reader" or "ezPDF" on Google Play
– for Apple phones search "PDF Voice Reader Aloud" on the App store

## *About the* TRENDS JOURNAL

**Gerald Celente** is the Founder/Director of the Trends Research Institute and Publisher of the weekly **Trends Journal** magazine. He is the author of the highly acclaimed and best-selling books *Trend Tracking* and *Trends 2000* (Warner Books).

With a 40-year track record of identifying, tracking, and forecasting trends, Celente is world-renowned as today's #1 Trend Forecaster. Celente has earned the reputation as a trusted name in trends for his many accurate forecasts; among them the 1987 Stock Market crash, Dot com bust, "Gold Bull Run," the "Panic of '08," the rise of organic foods, and the popularity of gourmet coffee long before Starbucks was a household name.

Self-described as a "Warrior for the Prince of Peace," Gerald Celente is also the Founder "Occupy Peace & Freedom," a not-for-profit movement to honor the Constitution and Bill of Rights and restore Freedoms.

# INSIDE


**TRENDS ON THE ECONOMIC AND MARKET FRONT 7**

ECONOMIC UPDATE - MARKET OVERVIEW 7

U.S. BOND MARKET BETS ON RECESSION 20

FED PROBABLY WILL HIKE RATES MORE SLOWLY, POWELL SAYS 22

THE AMERICAN DREAM TURNING INTO A NIGHTMARE 23

EVICTIONS SKYROCKET AFTER COVID-ERA PROTECTIONS EXPIRE 25

HARD TIMES AHEAD FOR PRIVATE LENDERS, MOODY'S WARNS 28

YELLEN AGREES WITH CELENTE: MORE BANKS WILL MERGE 29

U.S. HOME PRICES FALL BY MOST SINCE 2012 31

REMOTE WORKERS MORE FOOTLOOSE NOW THAN PRE-COVID 33

FEDEX SALES DROP 10 PERCENT IN THIRD QUARTERLY DECLINE 35

TOP TREND 2023, OFFICE BUILDING BUST: INVESTORS BACK AWAY FROM DOWNTOWN PROJECTS 36

TOP TREND 2023, OFFICE BUILDING BUST: EMPTY OFFICES MULTIPLY IN SILICON VALLEY 39

**TRENDS ON THE GLOBAL ECONOMIC FRONT 42**

WHEN THE ECONOMY FALLS JOBS GO WITH IT 42

GET READY FOR THE WORST: WORLDWIDE ECONOMIC SLOWDOWN 44

CENTRAL BANKS: NOW THE HARD PART BEGINS 45

IMF DEVELOPING GLOBAL DIGITAL CURRENCY PLATFORM 47

EU LOSES CONFIDENCE IN CHINA'S ECONOMIC POWER 49

SPOTLIGHT: EUROPE'S ECONOMIC CRISIS 51

EUROZONE BUSINESS ACTIVITY CONTINUES TO WEAKEN 51

GERMANY'S WEAKNESS DRAGS DOWN EUROZONE ECONOMY 52

U.K. INFLATION RATE UNCHANGED IN MAY: HOME OWNERS TO SUFFER 54

**UKRAINE WAR TREND UPDATE 58**

U.S., BRITAIN 'FULLY DRAGGED' INTO UKRAINE WAR IF THEIR EQUIPMENT IS USED TO STRIKE CRIMEA 58

DESPITE STALEMATE, ZELENSKY KEEPS HIS WESTERN-BACKERS HAPPY, SAYS HIS FORCES ARE 'ACTIVELY DESTROYING THE ENEMY' 62

COMEDIAN ZELENSKY ADMITS COUNTEROFFENSIVE IS FAILING, SAYS IT'S NOT A MOVIE 64

ZELENSKY: U.S. HAS 2 CHOICES IF UKRAINE IS DEFEATED: WATCH THE DEMISE OF NATO, OR GO TO WAR 67

AS U.S. INFRASTRUCTURE ROTS, U.S. KEEPS UKRAINE WAR ROLLING AS 'BIGS' CASH IN WITH WAR PROFITS 68

WAGNER GROUP MOVES ON MOSCOW AS WEST TRIES TO

PORTRAY PUTIN AS UNDER FIRE DOMESTICALLY 71
EU ANNOUNCES NEW SANCTIONS AGAINST RUSSIA THAT WILL ONLY HURT EUROPEANS 75
LAVROV SAYS HE'S NOT WORRIED ABOUT NATO OFFICIALLY JOINING THE CONFLICT 77
FUCK PEACE! U.S. MOBILIZES TO TARGET COUNTRIES WHO REFUSE TO FIGHT AGAINST RUSSIA 80
**FEATURED TRENDS GUEST ARTICLES 82**
MORE REASONS TO QUIT USING ANY ARTIFICIAL SWEETENERS 82
PUTIN SHOOTS HIMSELF IN THE HEAD 91
**PRESIDENTIAL REALITY SHOW® 2024 95**
PRESIDENTIAL REALITY SHOW: WSJ ATTEMPTS TO PAINT RFK JR AS CONSPIRACY THEORIST, DOING MURDOCH'S BIDDING 95
ABORTION BECOMING ISSUE REPUBLICANS WANT TO GO AWAY 97
**TRENDS IN TECHNOCRACY 100**
IS AMAZON LOOKING TO CANCEL HUMAN AUTHORS? 100
THIS WEEK IN SURVEILLANCE 109
THE TANTALIZING PROSPECT OF "SURVEILLANCE GPT" 109
**TRENDS IN CRYPTOS 112**
IMF SOFTENS CRYPTO STANCE...FOR THE MOMENT 112
BLOCKCHAIN BATTLES 114
FROM "OPERATION CHOKEPOINT" TO "OPERATION STICK A FORK IN IT" 114
**TRENDS IN THE COVID WAR 118**
COVID REVELATIONS: CDC KNEW ABOUT BREAKTHROUGH CASES IN JAN 2021, AND HOTEZ CITES CHILD STUDY SHOWING TINY COVID RISK TO ARGUE VAXXING KIDS WAS RIGHT 118
RFK JR POINTS OUT HOTEZ CLOSE TIES TO CHINESE COVID EXPERIMENTS 127
AS FORECAST, COVID LOCKDOWNS LEFT KIDS FAT AND DUMB 129
**TRENDS IN GEOPOLITICS 133**
'FAR-RIGHT' SURGES IN GERMANY AMID ECONOMIC UNCERTAINTY, AS WE LONG FORECAST 133
MIDDLE EAST MELTDOWN: ISRAEL KEEPS RAMPING UP WAR IN OCCUPIED TERRITORY 137
UN: OK FOR ISRAEL TO KILL PALESTINIAN CHILDREN, BUT SHAMES RUSSIA FOR KILLING CHILDREN IN UKRAINE 139
U.S. EXPRESSES CONCERN ABOUT NEW ISRAELI SETTLEMENT PLAN AS TENSIONS SOAR IN REGION 142
**TRENDS-EYE VIEW 146**
WHAT CAME FIRST, THE LAB-GROWN CHICKEN OR THE CELLS? 146
FOREVER CHEMICALS, NOT FOREVER LITIGATION: 3M TO PAY BILLIONS TO MAKE LAWSUITS GO AWAY 148
LIFE ON TITANIC SUBMERSIBLE MORE IMPORTANT THAN MIGRANTS ON FISHING BOAT 150
TOP TREND 2023: COLLEGES CONTINUE TO CLOSE ACROSS U.S. AS WOULD-BE STUDENTS WEIGH OTHER OPTIONS 152
OPERATION WARP SPEED: OBESITY ADDITION 155
POLITICIANS CAN'T FIGHT

HOMELESSNESS, CELENTE HAS SOLUTION 157
**TRENDS IN HI-TECH SCIENCE 159**
NEW HYDROGEL DISTILLS WATER FROM AIR 159
SOLAR REACTOR CONVERTS PLASTIC TRASH, CARBON FROM AIR INTO FUEL 161
HAVE DIABETES? EAT YOUR INSULIN 162
**TRENDS IN AI 165**
WHAT'S AI WORTH? $4.4 TRILLION A YEAR, McKINSEY SAYS 165
CHATBOT AS BIOTERRORIST 167
WALL STREET'S NEW WORRY ABOUT AI 169

## SUPPORT

at https://occupypeace.com

**THE GEEK SHALL INHERIT THE EARTH**

Welcome to this week's **Trends Journal**: **"THE GEEK SHALL INHERIT THE EARTH"**

Tech geeks have amassed fortunes beyond imagination, engineering digital landscapes that have not just changed our lives but now dictate our day-to-day interactions.

We are transitioning into an age where AI technology is reshaping how we communicate, work, and even learn. Yet, it's unsettling to think that these same tech moguls, who played their part in controlling the narrative during COVID-19, now hold the reins to the ethical guidelines of AI.

Is society prepared for this shift? Will our future be brighter under the reign of Silicon Valley, where influence over public thought is a matter of algorithms and code?

Will AI be a dot-com bust? No! "AI we own you."

**On the War Front**

World War III has begun, and we forecast that the Wagner Group revolt will push Russia to greatly escalate the Ukraine War... possibly into nuclear war.

Making a bad situation worse, the global economy is sinking into recession. We are headed into dangerous times. The facts are there for all to see and hear and we provide them for you in the **Trends Journal**.

In my lifetime I have never been more concerned about the future of Life on Earth. Talk of nuclear war keeps ramping up and if We the People do not rise to higher levels to stop it, we will deserve what we get... Hell on Earth. Talk of peace is prohibited in the mainstream media and by governments.

If you want Peace on Earth, please support us by making a generous tax-deductible donation to the Universal Church of Freedom Peace and Justice and/or Occupy Peace. The more support we have the more we can do.

Sincerely,

*Gerald Celente and the Trends Journal Team*

# TRENDS ON THE ECONOMIC AND MARKET FRONT

## ECONOMIC UPDATE - MARKET OVERVIEW

In identifying, analyzing and forecasting trends, it is essential to understand that all things are connected. As Chief Seattle said in 1855, “All things are connected, like the blood which unites us all. Man did not weave the web of life, he is merely a strand in it. Whatever he does to the web, he does to himself.”

Understanding that “all things are connected” our unique Globalnomic® trend forecasting methodology connects a broad range of socioeconomic, geopolitical, environmental, scientific, cultural, current events forming future trends.

Thus, for “Whatever he does to the web, he does to himself,” since recorded history the “leaders” have launched non-stop wars that keep raging that have slaughtered countless millions, destroyed entire nations ...and along with “big industry” they have

poisoned the planet. The food, the water, the air contaminated with chemicals and industrial manufactured contaminants that are destroying the minds and bodies of all living things.

The arrogant, maniacal, narcissistic, pathological lying sociopaths in charge—politicians, banksters, geeks, bureaucrats, the "Bigs", etc., in a country near you—have destroyed life on Earth... economically, socially, spiritually and environmentally. And if this dangerous megatrend is not reversed, Life on Earth will descend into Hell on Earth.

Besides blasting Japan with nuclear bombs, how about all those thousands of nuclear "tests" that our "leaders" exploded that have poisoned the atmosphere?

And now, for all the world to see and hear—but most are too deaf, dumb and blind to watch, look and listen—the United States and the United Kingdom have sent depleted uranium weaponry to Ukraine to keep bloodying and poisoning the killing fields. But don't worry, the wind does not blow past the Ukraine borders so all the poisons from the war will stay within their borders.

Making a bad situation worse, week after week there is not only more "talk" of a nuclear catastrophe on the near horizon—be it a Ukrainian nuclear plant controlled by Russians blown up by Ukraine or a nuclear exchange launched by Russia—there are idiotic articles from the mainstream propaganda networks that the brain-dead public call "news outlets"—telling people how to eat and live well following a nuclear Armageddon.

What does this have to do with our weekly ECONOMIC UPDATE?

Everything!

As we had forecast on 22 February 2020, and the cover of **The Trends Journal** magazine illustrates, World War III has begun:

We went from the COVID War to Ukraine War, to World War III... which began when Russia invaded Ukraine. Again, as avid supporters of Occupy Peace, we are totally opposed to Russia's invasion. As a trends magazine of which there are no peers, over the decades we published the trend lines—produced in large part by Washington—that led Moscow to launch the war.

Again, what does this have to do with the economy?

Hey all you Brits and European plantation workers of Slavelandia, don't you just love the sanctions your political clowns playing President and Prime Minister imposed on Russia that have spiked inflation?

And with inflation skyrocketing and the Bank of England raising interest rates that will cost millions of you to lose your jobs and homes, aren't you glad that your government keeps sending more money and weapons to fight the Ukraine War?

**COVID WAR**

Of course, with "all things connected," take a peek at another element of the crime syndicate as to who helped make life on Earth less lovely and more expensive to live: The Bankster Bandits.

Keeping the connections, let's go back to the COVID War launched by China on its 2020 Lunar New Year, "The Year of The Rat."

2020 was the year the world changed. Power hungry politicians—back by a cast of arrogant bureaucrats called health experts who know shit about natural healing and are nothing more than whores to the "system"—locked down the world to fight the COVID War.

Yes, that's what they called it, and only **The Trend Journal** documented it:

- "CORONAVIRUS: POLITICAL LEADERS ON THE WARPATH" (24 Mar 2020)
- "CORONAVIRUS: OFF TO WAR" (30 Mar 2020)
- "COVID RULES & REGULATIONS: POLITICIANS MAKING THEM UP AS THEY GO" (26 May 2020)
- "THIS WEEK IN COVID FEAR & ANXIETY" (21 Jul 2020)
- "COVID WAR: FEAR SELLS" (21 Jul 2020)
- "THE COVID WAR IS KILLING US" (22 Sep 2020)
- "COVID WAR MAKES THE RICH RICHER" (29 Jun 2021)
- "SPECIAL REPORT COVID WAR 2.0: THE 'DELTA' BLUES" (29 Jun 2021)
- "COVID WAR AND CIVIL WARS: KILLING MORE THAN THE VIRUS" (16 Nov 2021)

And as with all the wars of the past, the mindless/and or gutless masses of morons who are self-consumed and only give a shit about themselves, listen to what their leaders tell them and follow their orders.

"I'll tell you what businesses can stay open and which ones will close. I am your Prime Minister."

"Go home, don't come into the office, work from home. We are the Geeks"

"No, you can't see your dying mother, father, sister, brother, friend or loved one. I am your Fauci-addict and I tell you to put on your mask, stand six feet apart, sanitize your hands after you touch something... and don't have sex!"

"No Jab, No Job. How dare you not take the Operation Warp Speed gene therapy inoculation—the first ever injected into the human body? I am your Governor, I am your Mayor, I am your Boss...you do what I tell you."

"When you get on an airplane, wear your mask. But you can take it off when you eat and drink because COVID won't bother you when you're shoving food and drinks down your throat... the same is true when you go to a restaurant. When you walk in, you must wear your mask. When you sit down to eat and drink you can take it off...

because COVID does not go to table heights. And make sure your tables are six feet apart. And you can't sit at the bar or you will go to jail. I am your Health Expert."

The deranged list of draconian COVID War lockdowns and mandates goes on and on. Kids not allowed to go to school, people arrested for giving haircuts, no vax passport, no international travel, no proof of vax, no entry...the list goes on as does the damage it has done.

What does this have to do with the ECONOMIC UPDATE... a lot of everything.

To fight the COVID War governments pumped in countless trillions of dollars to boost the economies they destroyed with their lockdowns and their Bankster buddies lowered interest rates to keep juicing up both the economy and equity markets that should have crashed.

This was the foundation upon which the latest round of inflation was built upon: CHEAP MONEY, and not higher wages as the Wall Street Gang and Bankster Bandits keep selling to the public.

And now with the cheap money game over, the economic damage of the COVID War keeps rippling across the globe, particularly in China... the nation that launched the War and instituted zero-COVID policy which killed the lives and livelihoods of hundreds of millions.

***TREND FORECAST:*** *The world is heading into Dragflation: Declining economic growth and rising inflation. Yes, a number of commodities and product prices will decline from their highs but prices will still be much higher than before the COVID War. The bottom line, the middle class will continue to shrink and it will cost people a lot more to buy a lot less.*

*The facts speak for themselves. In this weekend's Wall Street Journal, they noted that back in 1985 a single income family would be considered living middle-class and could afford to send a kid to college by working for 39.7 weeks a year. Today, the plantation workers of Slavelandia would have to work for 62 weeks for the same middle-class life.*

*The bottom line is inflation.*

*Feeling the economic pain, across continents and across the economic spectrum, business confidence keeps falling as recessionary fears escalate. Indeed, the higher central banks raise interest rates, the deeper economies will fall.*

*While there will be a slight economic up-tick in the Northern Hemisphere as people vacation, we forecast that both equities and economies will dive deeper by October... when economic reality sets back in and businesses and people are out of their summer state of mind.*

**LAST WEEK: NEW DATA, RECESSION FEARS SNAP MARKETS' STREAK**

Worries that more central bank interest rate increases will spark a recession and new data showing global economic weakness ended stocks' multi-week streak of gains.

The U.S. Composite Purchasing Managers Index (PMI) slipped from 54.3 in May to 53.0 this month. Ratings above 50 indicate economic expansion; the higher the number, the more robust the economic activity is.

Europe's composite PMI weakened to 50.3 in a new survey. In May, it was 53.8. Business activity also slowed in Australia and Japan. (See "Get Ready For The Worst: Worldwide Economic Slowdown" in this issue.)

In testimony to Congress, U.S. Federal Reserve chair Jerome Powell virtually guaranteed at least one more interest rate bump this year; many Fed officials have called for at least two.

Adding those factors "on top of an equity market that's run higher and people are looking to take a few chips off the table," Allianz senior strategist Charlie Ripley told *The Wall Street Journal*.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average ended last week down 2.1 percent. The NASDAQ sank 2.6 percent, closing out an eight-week positive run. The Standard & Poor's 500 index lost 2.0 percent, its first losing week in the last six.

"Frankly, investors are sobering up," John Lynch, Comerica's chief investment officer, said to the *WSJ*.

The yield on the 10-year treasury note edged down from 3.797 percent Thursday to 3.737 at Friday's close. Yields decrease as securities prices rise.

Gold was off 1.9 percent to trade at $1,920.77 at 5 p.m. U.S. EDT on 23 June.

Oil's price lost traction amid ongoing evidence of global economic doldrums.

Brent crude for July delivery slipped 2.7 percent for the week to $73.85 a barrel at 5 p.m. U.S. EDT on 23 June. West Texas Intermediate crude, the benchmark for U.S. domestic oil prices, once again fell below the $70 mark. It slid 3.9 percent for the week to trade at $69.16.

Bitcoin staged a major rally, rocketing up 13.8 percent through the $30,000 milestone to price at $31,102.50 at 5 p.m. U.S. EDT on 23 June.

Stock markets abroad were as glum as those in the U.S.

London's FTSE shrugged off 2.3 percent. The trans-European Stoxx slumped 2.8 percent.

The Nikkei 225 in Japan was down 2.9 percent, breaking the recent uptrend. The South Korean KOSPI lost 1.8 percent.

Following euphoric gains last week after new government economic policies were reported to be in the works, China's stock markets turned tail.

Hong Kong's Hang Seng dove 5.1 percent, the CSI Composite 0.2 percent, and the SSE Composite 1.0 percent.

**YESTERDAY: STOCKS TRADED TENTATIVE AS INVESTORS CONTINUE TO WEIGH FED'S NEXT MOVE**

The Dow Jones Industrial Average was down 12.72, or 0.038 percent, yesterday to close at 33,714.17 and the S&P 500 was off 19.51, or 0.45 percent, to 4,328.82. The tech-heavy Nasdaq was shed 156.74, or 1.16 percent, to close at 13,335.78.

Texas factory activity declined in June by 3 points to -4.2, a reading indicative of a slight contraction in output, the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas said.

The yield on the 10-year U.S. Treasury note ended at 3.719 percent, which was down from 3.737 percent on Friday.

***TRENDPOST:*** *We have detailed that once again, as with the COVID War, rather than getting healthy and building up one's immune system, as the obesity trend keeps growing, rather than telling people to stop eating too much or eating junk food and to exercise, we've been reporting on drug companies looking to capitalize with drugs that target obesity.*

*So big is this market, that Pfizer lost 4.5 percent after stopping the development of an obesity and diabetes drug because it detected higher liver enzymes, which would indicate liver damage, CNBC reported.*

Elsewhere, London's FTSE was down 0.11 percent, to 7,453.58 and the pan-European STOXX 600 closed 0.1 percent lower

In Asia, Japan's Nikkei closed 0.25 percent lower to 32,698.81. Hong Kong's Hang Seng was off 0.4 percent, and South Korea's Kospi rose 0.47 percent to 2,582.2.

China's Shanghai Composite closed down 1.48 percent to 3,150.62 and the Shenzhen Component was off 1.69 percent to 10,872.3.

**OIL:** Brent crude futures gained 33 cents, or 0.4 percent, to $74.18 a barrel, while U.S. West Texas Intermediate was up 48 cents, or 0.7 percent, to $69.64 a barrel.

Traders didn't know what to expect after the chaos in Russia last weekend but stability seemed to return to Moscow and the oil market—largely— stabilized.

"Collectively the world would have breathed a sigh of relief at least on the oil market side that the disruption in the Russian state did not go through the worst that people feared," Alok Sinha, Standard Chartered global head of oil & gas and chemicals, told CNBC.

***TRENDPOST:*** *Should the Ukraine War escalate and more turmoil rattle Russia, there is a shot that oil price will again rise. Also, with Israel ramping up attacks on Palestine, stealing more land in the name of building "settlements" as again detailed in this week's* ***Trends Journal****, plus more talk about attacking Iran, should war break out in the Middle East, we forecast Brent Crude will spike nearly double its current price which will in turn crash economies and equity markets.*

**GOLD:** Gold rose 0.6 percent to $1,932 per ounce after falling nearly 2 percent last week in response to Fed Head Jay Powell's comments indicating more rate hikes by the end of the year. The CME Fedwatch tool said the market sees a 72 percent chance the Fed will raise rates again in July after taking a "hawkish pause" in June.

We have long noted that higher interest rates make the precious metal a less appealing option for investors since it is a non-yielding asset.

***TRENDPOST:*** *Gerald Celente has identified gold as a true safe-haven and—given the uncertainty in the world—a good investment.*

*Jim Wyckoff, senior analyst at Kitco, told Reuters, "We are seeing some modest safe-haven demand in gold on the Russian incursion that was quickly aborted over the weekend. But there are still some underlying worries. The marketplace wonders what's going to happen next because the Russian military appears to be destabilizing. Putin appears to see his power weakening, and that has major implications around the world."*

**BITCOIN:** The world's most popular crypto was trading down slightly for most of the day after touching its one-year high of $31,300 on Friday amid reports that BlackRock, the $9-trillion asset management giant, plans to start a bitcoin ETF, CoinDesk reported.

Ran Neuner, host and founder of Crypto Banter, said in an interview with Kitco that Bitcoin's price would at least double in 2024 if BlackRock's ETF is approved.

"I think the price could actually be much higher [than 2X]," Neuner said. "I'm just being conservative."

***TRENDPOST:*** *BlackRock's move bodes well for bitcoin because it gives traders much-needed confidence.*

**TODAY: STOCKS RISE AS CONSUMERS FEEL MORE OPTIMISTIC**

The Dow Jones Industrial Average gained 212.03, or 0.63 percent, today and the benchmark S&P 500 was up 49.59, or 1.15 percent, to 4,378.41. The tech-heavy Nasdaq was up 219.90, or 1.65 percent, to 13,555.67.

One of the big news items from The Street today was Walgreens losing 9.3 percent on weaker-than-expected earnings, indicating that Americans are watching their spending.

The U.S. Commerce Department announced Tuesday that new home sales popped 12.2 percent in May and came in at a seasonally adjusted annualized rate of 763,000 homes. Economists were expecting 675,000 new units.

***TRENDPOST:*** *It's not uncommon for these numbers to come in higher than expected and then—after a positive news cycle—get revised down, which we saw in April. New home sales in April were initially reported at 683,000 and revised down to 680,000.*

The Conference Board reported that consumer confidence hit its highest level since January 2022 as inflation is close to half as low as its peak. Its consumer confidence index rose to 109.7 in June from 102.5 in May.

About 30 percent of those who surveyed said they expected to be better off six months from now, compared with 14 percent who said they expected to be worse off.

S&P/Case-Shiller released its monthly Home Price Indices for April reported a -0.2 percent annual decrease, down from a gain of 0.7 percent in the previous month. The decline was the first since April 2012.

House-buying affordability in April fell to its lowest level since November, *The Wall Street Journal* reported, citing the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta.

Elsewhere, London's benchmark FTSE gained 7.88, or 0.11 percent, to 7,461.46 and the pan-European STOXX600 was up 0.22, or 0.05 percent, to 452.90. In Asia, Japan's Nikkei was off 160.48, or 0.49 percent, to 32,538.33 and South Korea's Kospi was down 0.81, or 0.03 percent, to 2,581.39. Hong Kong's Hang Seng was up 354.00, or 1.88 percent, to 19,148.13.

In China, the Shanghai Composite was up 38.82, or 1.23 percent, to 3,189.44 and the Shenzhen Component was up 105.78, or 0.97 percent, to 10,978.08.

**OIL:** Brent crude was down $1.81, or 2.44 percent, to $72.37 a barrel and also gave back 2.28 percent, to $67.81.

Saudi Arabia could dramatically reduce shipments to the U.S. and already plans to reduce output in July by 1 million barrels per day, which could be extended. Riyad is trying to adapt to the global economic slowdown as central banks raise interest rates.

***TRENDPOST:*** *Oil prices sank despite China promising more stimulus today, so the country can reach its annual economic growth target of around 5 percent. Saudi Arabia continues to compete with Russia for the Chinese market—with Beijing taking advantage of discounted Russian prices. The low oil prices indicate slowing economic growth.*

**GOLD:** Gold prices slipped $11.10, or 0.57 percent, to $1,922.80 on evidence that the Fed will continue to increase interest rates.

The precious metal faced pressure from the new-homes data.

Gold still lost ground despite the U.S. Dollar Index lowering 0.20 percent against the bucket of other currencies.

***TRENDPOST:*** *Gold has lost some of its luster in recent trading but—as evidenced in this weekend's turmoil in Russia—it remains The Safe Haven asset. Watch for the Ukraine War to continue to spin out of control and gold prices to sail past $2,000. As we had forecast, the higher U.S. interest rates rise the stronger the U.S. dollar gets and the lower gold prices fall, since gold is dollar based and it costs more for other countries to buy it.*

*However, we maintain our forecast for lower interest rates in the run up to the U.S. Presidential Realty Show® in 2024...which will sharply push up gold prices.*

**BITCOIN:** The world's most popular crypto was trading up $438.00, or 1.45 percent, to $30,710.10 as of 4:18 p.m. ET.

Reuters reported today that Fidelity is close to submitting its filing for a spot bitcoin exchange-traded fund (ETF), following BlackRock that applied last week, sending the crypto higher.

Major financial companies like Fidelity and BlackRock entering the ETF game is a confidence-booster for crypto-holders after some turbulence after recent lawsuits from the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission against crypto exchanges Coinbase Global and Binance.

***TRENDPOST:*** *There's an ETF gold rush occurring between financial firms and there's reports emerging that BlackRock "could have insider information about the SEC's BTC ETF policies," Coin Telegraph reported.*

*The report noted that the Winklevoss twins filed an application back in 2017 and there's some who believe that there have not been any major developments to warrant a change in policy.*

*Investors would be wise to watch any pro-Bitcoin comments out of Congress, who seem to be extraordinary stock-pickets.*

---

## U.S. BOND MARKET BETS ON RECESSION

Investors in treasury bonds are raising their bets that the U.S. Federal Reserve's steady stream of interest rate increases will tip the economy into recession this year, even though the stock prices stay high and a growing number of economists doubt the economy will shrink, the *Financial Times* reported.

Last week, interest rates on short-term government bonds exceeded their longer-term counterparts by the most in three months.

On 21 June, two-year securities were returning 4.74 percent to the 10-years' 3.78 percent.

This "inverted yield curve"—when short-term bond yields exceed long-term returns—has signaled every recession in the past half-century, the *FT* noted.

The curve inverted in April 2022 after the Fed began raising interest rates and has continued to widen since. Last week, the span's width was approaching that reached during March's banking crisis, which set a 42-year record.

The spread widened again after Fed chair Jerome Powell testified in Congress last week that the bank was almost certain to raise rates again in July.

The flipped curve "suggests markets are increasingly convinced that the U.S. central bank will continue [raising interest rates], which will bring down inflation and curtail economic growth," the *FT* wrote.

"Bad things happen when the yield curve is inverted," Pimco portfolio manager Mike Cudzil told the *FT*. "With very inverted yield curves, you tend to see a slowdown in credit creation.

“This is one reason why a shallow recession by the end of this year or beginning of next year is our base-case scenario,” he said.

Higher interest rates make it hard for businesses to borrow, which hobbles business activity. The inverted yield curve results in banks making fewer loans, which also stunts growth.

It would be “foolish to bet against a recession,” economist Jurrien Timmer at Fidelity Investments said, because “when the yield curve gets inverted to this degree for this long, a recession has always happened.”

Many analysts still hold the view that inflation will fall back close to the Fed’s 2-percent target rate without tanking the economy. This month, Goldman Sachs cut its odds of a recession to just 25 percent.

***TREND FORECAST:*** *As we have noted in “Again in May, Consumers Spent More to Buy Less” (20 Jun 2023) and many other reports, consumers are cutting back the amount of stuff they buy.*

*The change in the amount of dollars they are spending month to month is a fraction of the inflation rate, meaning that shoppers are reducing their purchases.*

*Because consumer spending supports nearly 70 percent of the U.S. economy, domestic consumption is headed for recession if not in one already.*

*This month, S&P Global’s purchasing managers index for U.S. manufacturing sank to 46.3 from 48.4 in May, registering the biggest contraction in the sector since December.*

*Ratings below 50 indicate shrinking business activity.*

*Adding U.S. weakness and the prospect of even higher interest rates together with the decelerating global economy, we maintain our forecast of a full-on U.S. recession arriving later this year.*

## FED PROBABLY WILL HIKE RATES MORE SLOWLY, POWELL SAYS

After raising interest rates 10 times in as many meetings, the U.S. Federal Reserve's Open Market Committee is likely to move rates higher less often, Fed chair Jerome Powell told the House financial services committee on 21 June.

"Given how far we've come, it might make sense to move rates higher but do so at a more moderate pace," he said.

The Fed's committee paused its campaign of rate hikes at its meeting this month, leaving the deposit rate at 5 percent and the loan rate at 5.25 percent.

U.S. inflation fell to 4.0 percent in May, its lowest in more than 18 months, but still twice the Fed's 2-percent target rate.

The pause reportedly was a compromise between Fed officials who wanted to keep raising rates to quell inflation faster and those who wanted to leave rates untouched indefinitely.

After the implosion of Signature and Silicon Valley banks in mid-March, some committee members saw banks tighten their lending requirements and build their cash reserves. They believe that will have the same impact as a Fed rate increase, meaning the central bank could pause its hikes indefinitely.

Those officials worried that the banking crisis would create a credit shortage, especially as commercial property owners will be trying to refinance more than $150 billion in loans through 2024.

Also, the U.S. government is borrowing another $1 trillion to pay its bills. Those factors together may have an impact similar to a rate increase by the Fed.

In fact, the central bank's 10 rate increases, combined with those additional factors, could slow the economy more than officials intend, heightening the risk of a recession, some analysts have warned.

Others on the committee are reluctant to stop raising rates because core inflation—which does not include food or energy costs—has been particularly stubborn. They fear that slowing the rate-hike campaign will give core inflation a chance to get out of hand.

***TREND FORECAST:*** *The U.S. economy cannot tolerate another 50 point basis point rate hike. The economy is already slowing down, and as we have forecast, it will stay a bit strong during the summer months but fall in autumn.*

*The guess on The Street is that there is a 75-percent probability of another increase.*

## THE AMERICAN DREAM TURNING INTO A NIGHTMARE

A key component of the traditional "American Dream" is the ideal that anyone can climb from poverty to prosperity by their own hard work.

However, it is easier to fulfill that aspect of the dream in Australia, Denmark, Germany, or the U.K. than in the U.S., according to a new report.

The study, titled "The Intergenerational Persistence of Poverty in High-Income Countries," looked at poverty's persistence from one generation to the next in various nations.

The result: "Intergenerational poverty in the U.S. is four times stronger than in Denmark and Germany, and twice as strong as in Australia and the U.K."

The study was conducted by researchers at Bocconi University in Italy, Sweden's Stockholm University, and the Rockwool Foundation, a Danish charity.

The research data showed that childhood poverty in the U.S. carries a 43-percent chance of producing an adult living in poverty. In contrast, the correlation in Denmark is just 8 percent.

The correlation between poverty as a child and as an adult has little to do with education, racial discrimination, or geographic location, the study team found.

Instead, continuing poverty correlates to a country's tax rates and structures and the social safety net, they said.

"The U.S. is the archetype of a liberal and residualist welfare state, featuring stratified access to higher education and employment, strong earnings returns to higher education, and a comparatively weak welfare state to insure against risks in adulthood," the report concluded.

The group cited a "residual poverty penalty" in the U.S., meaning the lifetime damage that can be done by childhood poverty, such as the absence of adequate health care or a good education.

"Exposure to childhood poverty is particularly severe in the U.S.," the study said.

The new study mirrors the result of a 2017 report by the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis.

The Fed analysis projected the chances of a child born in the lowest-earning 20 percent of families climbing into the top 20 percent.

The odds were 13.5 percent in Canada, 11.7 percent in Denmark, 9 percent in the U.K., and 7.5 percent in the U.S.

In April 2022, a study from the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago confirmed that economic mobility in the U.S. has been declining for more than 40 years and had fallen below that of several other advanced nations.

***TREND FORECAST:*** *As we have long forecast, the decline of America's middle class parallels the demise of the antitrust laws such as the Robinson-Patman Act, The Sherman Antitrust Act, The Clayton Antitrust Act, the Federal Communications Act, The Glass-Steagall Act etc., that allowed the "Bigs" to get bigger and kill the mom-and-pop and small businesses enterprises that once inhabited a place called "The Land of Opportunity."*

*What also killed America's middle class are the hundreds of trillions stolen from taxpayers and given to the military industrial complex to kill millions across the globe in endless wars... rather than spending that money to build the economy. As Gerald Celente has long noted, "The business of America is war. The business of China is business."*

**EVICTIONS SKYROCKET AFTER COVID-ERA PROTECTIONS EXPIRE**

Since the federal ban on COVID-era evictions ended on 21 October, 2021, evictions have shot up across the U.S. and by as much as 50 percent in some cities.

Many people who were kept housed by the moratorium still have not replaced their pre-COVID incomes and now face rents that have gone up as much as 50 percent since the ban was imposed.

The $46.5 billion in emergency rental assistance Congress also allotted during the COVID War has been spent.

As a result, homelessness is on the rise.

“The federal moratorium is obviously over and emergency rental assistance money has dried up in most places,” researcher Daniel Grubbs-Donovan at  Princeton University’s Eviction Lab told the Associated Press.

“Across the country, low-income renters are in an even worse situation than before [COVID] due to massive increases in rent during [COVID], inflation, and other financial difficulties,” he added.

The lab tracks evictions in more than 35 cities in 10 states.

Eviction filings are more than 50 percent higher than in 2019 in Houston and Minneapolis, among other cities. The rate was 35 percent higher in Nashville, 33 percent greater in Phoenix, and the rate in the state of Rhode Island grew by 32 percent.

Princeton’s lab estimated overall U.S. evictions were up 78.6 percent in 2022, year on year, after eviction bans were lifted.

Making things harder, rents have grown by 30.5 percent since 2019, real estate website Zillow reported.

The U.S. is short 7.3 million units of affordable housing, according to the National Low Income Housing.

Forty of New York state’s 62 counties counted more evictions last year than in 2019; in two counties, the number more than doubled.

Housing advocates urged the state’s legislature to limit rent increases to 3 percent annually or 1.5 times the rate of inflation but lawmakers failed to do so.

Texas saw a record 270,000 evictions in 2022 after COVID-era protections disappeared, the AP said. At the same time, housing prices skyrocketed as Austin, Dallas, and other Texas cities welcomed a wave of footloose remote workers.

However, some states and cities have extended support for troubled tenants.

More than 200 measures have been enacted, including legal representation for tenants facing eviction, sealing eviction records, and mandatory mediation to divert disputes from courts, the National Low Income Housing Coalition reported.

These and similar measures have kept evictions 41 percent below 2019 levels in New York City and 33 percent in Philadelphia, where 70 percent of the more than 5,000 eviction cases were resolved without courts. Philly also allotted $30 million in rental aid.

***PUBLISHER'S NOTE:*** *This new wave of people who have no secure place to live makes Gerald Celente's homelessness solution even more urgent.*

*Instead of warehousing and hiding homeless people in shelters, Celente's plan would provide these individuals the opportunity to get out of the cities and into rural facilities run on the model of Boys Town, the famous village in Nebraska.*

*The U.S. has countless locations that are not far from major cities that would be suitable for Homeless Towns.*

*For example, in New York's Catskill Mountains, the area once famously known as the "Borscht Belt," or "Jewish Alps" where there were thriving lovely hotels and famous celebrity hang outs… they are now empty or demolished, and the area is now largely underpopulated.*

*These lovely country locations would be conducive to self-sustaining villages where the currently homeless could live in clean, safe environments and, while receiving needed treatment, learn to work with their hands and minds while helping to solve the worsening homeless crisis.*

*Pilot programs already are underway.*

*A New Mexico city has proposed spending $1 million to buy three acres of land that could be the site of a 200,000-square-foot facility to house homeless veterans. A private charity in New Hampshire bought a farm to house homeless veterans with mental illness while they receive treatment and learn farming skills.*

## HARD TIMES AHEAD FOR PRIVATE LENDERS, MOODY'S WARNS

The private credit industry—lenders other than banks, such as private equity firms—is confronting its "first serious challenge" as tens of billions of dollars in loans made at the height of a booming economy are coming due amid slumping global business activity, Moody's Analytics said.

The loans were made when interest rates were near zero and during a booming economy and stock market.

"This shift in market conditions will mark the first test on non-bank private lenders' ability to manage through recession and an increase in borrower defaults," Christina Padgett, a Moody's associate managing director, told the *Financial Times*.

Ares Capital Corp. and Owl Rock Capital are private "business development corporations" that drew specific mention in Moody's report.

Like many other lenders, Ares and Owl Rock began by financing small takeovers. As the market boomed, they underwrote bigger deals, many of which banks refused to touch.

Ares and Owl Rock were part of some of 2021's biggest mergers and acquisitions, some of which may now be faltering financially.

Moody's did not downgrade the credit rating of either firm but indicated that their earnings available for paying off their debts could plunge by half.

***TRENDPOST:*** *The cheap money game is over and those that took on more loans to build their businesses that should have gone bust during the COVID War but were artificially propped up with cheap money and ultra-low interest rates will continue to fail.*

*Since then, the U.S. Federal Reserve has moved interest rates from 0.25 percent to 5 to 5.25 percent and data is piling up that shows the world economy in the midst of a long slide. (See "Get Ready For The Worst: Worldwide Economic Slowdown" and ECONOMIC UPDATE in this issue.)*

## YELLEN AGREES WITH CELENTE: MORE BANKS WILL MERGE

More banks will merge this year as their costs rise, operating margins shrink, and other institutions offer higher interest rates to depositors, U.S. treasury secretary Janet Yellen said at last week's conference in Paris on global debt and climate issues.

We have been predicting a rising number of bank mergers since the mid-March collapse of Signature and Silicon Valley banks, for example in "Banks Pay Higher Interest in Attempt to Hold Onto Customers" (25 Apr 2023).

After the banks imploded, depositors began shifting their money to larger banks they believe are "too big to fail" or to money market funds and other venues that pay as much as 4 percent or more on deposits.

The average interest rate conventional banks pay on savings accounts was 0.25 percent last week, according to Bankrate.com.

Conventional banks are having to raise interest rates they pay on deposits to hang onto their customers, but those higher interest payments are whacking banks' profitability, Yellen noted.

"Her comments are the clearest sign yet that regulators are bracing for the tumult the industry weathered earlier this year to flare up," *The Wall Street Journal* said.

After the banks' collapse this spring, the treasury department guaranteed all deposits in the failed institutions, not just those that fell within the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp.'s $250,000 limit.

U.S. small and regional banks still collectively hold more than $500 billion in low-yield treasury securities they bought during the COVID War and have been unable to sell because newer bonds pay better returns.

Now weak second-quarter earnings could drive down banks' share prices and force more to put themselves up for sale.

"I don't think it's a huge threat to the sector, but there probably will be banks that end up wanting to merge," Yellen told a press briefing.

While mergers could shore up the banking industry's stability, there remains a danger of the biggest banks becoming even bigger, she noted.

"We certainly don't want overconcentration," she added.

Small and mid-size banks hold more than 60 percent of loans against U.S. office real estate, a sector now undergoing a sharp devaluation, as we have reported in "Market Value Plunges for San Francisco Office Buildings" (2 May 2023) and many other articles.

Remote work has forced landlords to slash rents to keep tenants and attract new ones to fill their empty spaces. At the same time, operating costs and interest rates have risen.

As a result, office building owners have begun to give their buildings to their lenders or simply default on their loans. For example, see "Top Private Equity Firm Defaults on Two Office Tower Loans" (21 Feb 2023).

About $270 billion in commercial real estate loans are coming due this year at a time when a growing number of already-strapped borrowers will need to refinance.

The office property crisis will not create chaos in the U.S. banking industry, although the additional pressure could cause some banks to fail, Yellen said.

***TREND FORECAST:*** *Given the pressures on banks described above, the industry is already in a slow-rolling crisis.*

*Yes, more banks will merge and the pace of consolidation will rise as the office building bust rolls out. That extra pressure also will push some banks into collapse. Indeed, the worst is yet to come.*

## U.S. HOME PRICES FALL BY MOST SINCE 2012

The median U.S. home price sank by 3.1 percent in May in the largest year-over-year drop since December 2011, the National Association of Realtors (NAR) reported.

The median price stood at $396,100 on 31 May.

Last month marked the fourth consecutive month of declining prices, which has not happened since 2012, according to the NAR.

Prices fell in the western U.S., where many locales saw prices skyrocket during the COVID War. Prices in the East rose slightly, regaining some of what they lost over the past three years.

Prices fell the most in Austin, TX, down 15.1 percent. They dropped 14.3 percent in Boise, ID, and 11.2 percent in Oakland, CA. Prices gained 10 percent in Hartford, CT, 9.7 percent in Rochester, NY, and 9.3 percent in Cincinnati.

Sales of existing homes, which account for most of the housing market, edged up 0.2 percent last month from April to 4.3 million but were 20.4 percent fewer than a year previous.

The number of existing homes sold in the West rose 2.6 percent and 1.5 percent in the South. Sales declined in the Northeast and Midwest.

Sales overall have fallen by about a third since 2022 began, the NAR said.

Prices are still elevated compared to pre-COVID levels, shutting out many potential modest- and moderate-income buyers. Also, many present owners with low-rate mortgages are reluctant to give them up.

Mortgage interest rates have doubled in the past 18 months, also locking out many potential buyers. The average national rate for a fixed-rate, 30-year loan was 6.67 percent on 22 June, according to the Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corp.

The average home sold in May was on the market for 18 days and the number of newly listed homes was off 23 percent from a year earlier, Realtor.com said.

First-time home buyers made up 28 percent of the market in May and a quarter of last month's home sales were all-cash deals, NAR noted.

***TREND FORECAST:*** *Prices will continue to edge down but the combination of relatively few houses for sale and high demand for them will keep prices above historical norms. The most desirable homes will still see bidding wars.*

*High interest rates, now due to move higher next month under the U.S. Federal Reserve, will cull the market further, leaving a smaller number of buyers. That factor will push prices down but not greatly.*

*Today, the S&P CoreLogic Case-Shiller national home price index reported that home prices in April were still down 0.2 percent compared with April 2022. And as we had long forecast, they would slump but not dive, the index also showed the prices were 0.5 percent higher month to month, after seasonal adjustments and prices are only 2.4 percent below their June 2022 peak.*

*Prices will not fall dramatically until the U.S. enters a prolonged, full-blown depression.*

**REMOTE WORKERS MORE FOOTLOOSE NOW THAN PRE-COVID**

Before the COVID War, working at home was a rare privilege and most who enjoyed it were comfortable being close to the office when they needed to stop in.

However, during the COVID era, workers became much less tethered to their home base, according to U.S. census data on migration The *New York Times* analyzed.

A large number of workers who had to be at a central location only once in a while moved out of cities to suburban or exurban locales.

Many employees who no longer needed to report to a central office at all moved to areas where housing was cheaper and the quality of life was seen as better.

In 2020 and 2021, a quarter of all workers who made a long-distance move were remote workers, the data showed.

In 2019 and 2019, about 20,000 remote workers left the San Francisco metro area; in 2020 and 2021, 110,000 decamped. In those two pre-COVID years, 40,000 remote workers bid goodbye to New York City and its environs; in the following two years, 200,000 moved away.

Austin, Boise, Denver, Dallas, Nashville, and Raleigh, NC, were among the cities that boomed, welcoming remote-working migrants from elsewhere.

Spots known as vacation getaways also took on more new residents than expected, given that their local economies were not geared to well-heeled knowledge workers.

Those places included Cape Cod in Massachusetts; Ocean City, NJ; and Salisbury, MD, a beachfront area popular with vacationers from Washington, DC.

During the COVID era, more than 250,000 U.S. workers moved to areas with high concentrations of "dwellings intended for seasonal use," or vacation homes, a number 2.5 times more than moved there in 2018 and 2019.

About half of those migrants identified themselves as remote workers.

The higher a remote worker's income, the more likely that worker was to move, the analysis revealed.

Before COVID, most remote or home workers were women caring for children or relatives and often took a pay cut in exchange for the privilege, the *NYT* noted.

During the COVID War, companies adopted technologies that enabled most office workers to be footloose. Shifts in work policies and investments in technology to accommodate the COVID-era lockdowns freed employees or contract workers to do what many had wanted for a long time.

***TREND FORECAST:*** *As we have noted, the COVID War that was launched in 2020 changed the world in many ways, and for those who own commercial office space, it changed it for the worse.*

*Today, the U.S. Census Bureau reported that employees in the computer and mathematical job sectors went from 60 percent working on-site in 2019, a year before the COVID War, to 60 percent in 2021. And those working in the real estate, finance and insurance sectors went from 67 percent working in the office prior to the COVID War to just 43 percent according to the Survey of Income and Program Participation report.*

*The bottom line is that this work-remote, work-at-home trend is here to stay and will only become a part of the new normal. And as we have long forecast, it will decimate the commercial office building sector and bring down small and medium size banks that are holding the loans. And with interest rates rising, it will make a bad situation worse as many of these commercial loans float higher as rates rise.*

**FEDEX SALES DROP 10 PERCENT IN THIRD QUARTERLY DECLINE**

Fedex sales fell 10.1 percent to $21.9 billion in its fiscal fourth quarter ending 31 May, the company reported. Its share price dipped 1 percent on news of the shipper's third consecutive quarterly decline.

The company also projected sales will be flat, or grow by just a few percent, in fiscal 2024, due to inflation, higher interest rates, and the world's general economic slowdown.

Since the COVID War ended, consumers have shifted their spending from goods to services, CEO Raj Subramaniam noted in a call with analysts.

Fedex is focused on its plan to combine its ground and express shipping divisions into a seamless single operation, part of its effort to cut $4 billion in annual costs by 2026.

Combining the two divisions in Canada alone will save about $100 million a year, the company said.

Fedex also has raised prices to offset the loss of package volume.

***TREND FORECAST:*** *We note this decline since it reflects a very large segment of the economy. Thus, the more orders they deliver, the stronger the economy. The less orders delivered, the weaker the economy.*

## TOP TREND 2023, OFFICE BUILDING BUST: INVESTORS BACK AWAY FROM DOWNTOWN PROJECTS

Remote workers have moved out of city centers. Now investors are following them.

Real estate trusts focused on investment in downtown areas are trading at less than half their pre-COVID levels, *The Wall Street Journal* reported. Lenders are demanding extra interest to make loans against office buildings; bonds to support New York City's bus and subway system have a hard time finding buyers.

Until 2020, commuters supported an economic ecosystem that knitted together office buildings, restaurants and retailers, a range of service businesses, transportation networks, and brought in enough tax dollars to support city governments and their lenders and bondholders.

The shift to remote work snatched away the foundation of that ecosystem, with offices now only 50-percent occupied compared to 2019, according to security firm Kastle Systems, which monitors swipe card data in more than 2,000 office buildings.

Public transit systems are seeing only a third as many riders as before COVID, according to federal data.

Office building owners have slashed rents to hold or attract tenants while having to pay costs rising with inflation. Without the usual volume of daily commuters, businesses closed or scaled back staff and hours. With less income to businesses and property owners, cities collect fewer taxes.

We have documented this groundshift in urban economic structures in our ongoing series Top Trend 2023: Office Building Bust, which has included stories such as:

- *"Commercial Real Estate in a Tailspin" (20 Oct 2020)*
- *"Deloitte Abandons More London Office Space" (26 Apr 2022)*
- *"GM Softens Back-to-the-Office Requirement After Worker Backlash" (4 Oct 2022)*
- *"Business Office Bust Begins to Bite" (20 Dec 2022)*
- *"New York City's Workforce Sharply Shrinking" (24 Jan 2023)*
- *"Office Occupancy Half of What It Used to Be" (7 Feb 2023)*
- *"The Commercial Real Estate Face-Off"* (28 Mar 2023)
- *"Price of Hedging Interest Rates Wallops Office Landlords"* (9 May 2023)

"You could see this as a slow-motion change or the beginning of a slow-moving train wreck," Richard Ciccarone, past president of Merritt Research Services, which analyzes cities' credit. "I hope it's not a train wreck but it could be."

The quality of urban life already is deteriorating, with tourists and residents citing empty storefronts and bus stops that have become camps for persons with mental illness, the *WSJ* said, adding that New York City is staring into a $7-billion budget hole by 2027.

Federal aid helped cities limp through 2020 and 2021 but most of that money has been spent. Meanwhile, cities are on their own to deal with rising costs, worker shortages, and skimpier revenues.

A rising number of requests by office building owners to reduce their assessed property values and, therefore, their property taxes is a particular worry, warned money manager Asset Preservation Advisors.

Those challenges could cut the city of San Francisco's current $3-billion annual revenues by as much as $200 million in the next five years, the company estimated.

***TREND FORECAST:*** *Early in the COVID War, in articles such as "Real Estate's Reality" (7 Jul 2020), we warned that demand for office space would crash and never fully return. Events have long since proven our prediction correct.*

*We also have accurately forecast the resulting financial damage to cities, warning of it in articles including "New York Office Vacancies Set Record"(13 Jul 2021) "Mass Expiration of Office Leases Threatens Landlords" (26 Apr 2022), and "'Dimming Hope' That Pre-COVID Demand for Office Space Will Return" (22 Nov 2022).*

***TREND FORECAST:*** *Thousands of office buildings, especially older ones, across the U.S., are doomed.*

*Some may be converted to apartments, but only those accidentally suited to financially feasible conversion. Most are not suited, for reasons we explained in "Plan to Turn New York's Vacant Hotels To Housing Not Working" (5 Apr 2022) and "Wall Street, Dead Street. Office Buildings Going Condo" (28 Jun 2022).*

*Landlords will be stuck holding many buildings, even newer ones, unable to pay their way. Eventually, the owners will default on their taxes or mortgages.*

*As we have often noted, cities are at the bottom of this pile of financial wreckage.*

*Municipalities will lose a significant share of their property tax base, which makes up at least 40 percent, and often the majority, of cities' revenues.*
*Cities may reclaim some of these buildings for back taxes and foot the exorbitant bill for reconditioning them as low-income housing or shelters for homeless persons.*

*Ultimately, cities will wind up owning portfolios of empty office buildings that no one can afford to keep up.*

*At that point, much of the remaining properties will be sold for cheap, relatively speaking, and buildings will be demolished to prepare the sites for new lives in a new economy.*

**TOP TREND 2023, OFFICE BUILDING BUST: EMPTY OFFICES MULTIPLY IN SILICON VALLEY**

As we had long noted, it was the Geeks who were the first to fight the COVID War by ordering their employees not to come to work because they would get/spread the virus. Now, the Silicon Valley bonanza that they created with the dawn of the Internet Revolution has turned to dusk.
Confirming our 2020 office building bust that had forecast in 2020, Alphabet, Meta Platforms, and other Silicon Valley mainstays are abandoning office space at an accelerating pace, *The Wall Street Journal* reported.

Office vacancy rates in Palo Alto, San Jose, and Sunnyvale—the three towns at the heart of the fabled tech center—reached 17 percent this month, compared to 11 percent in 2019, according to data firm CoStar.
A record 7.6 million square feet are available to sublease in the three towns, nearly triple the 2.7 million in 2019, CoStar noted, including 700,000 recently offered by Meta.

The empty rate in nearby Menlo Park and Mountain View topped 20 percent this spring. In Mountain View and Moffett Park, Google just put another 1.3 million square feet up for sublease.

Along Menlo Park's Sand Hill Road, home to many high-flying venture capital firms, empty space has more than tripled compared to four years ago, now sitting at 14 percent.

Andreesen Horowitz, a renowned investment firm, still holds its office space there but told the *WSJ* it operates "primarily virtually."

A little north of Silicon Valley in San Francisco, vacancies have soared past 25 percent, triple their pre-COVID proportion.

The city's rate is higher because a significant portion of its offices were taken by small firms, which canceled leases quickly when the tech economy slumped, the *WSJ* noted.

Amazon, Google, Lyft, and Salesforce are among the tech companies that require workers to be in the office at least some of the time.

However, that mandate is not enough to make use of the amount of square footage the companies needed previously.

Tech companies hired voraciously in 2020 and 2021 as consumers invested in tech while locked down at home.

However, the companies held onto their office space, assuming that workers would return once the COVID War was over.

They didn't.

As a result, Silicon Valley has one of the lowest rates of returning workers, according to security firm Kastle Systems, which tracks swipe card rates in more than 2,000 office buildings.

During the first week of this month, only 39 percent of workers in San Jose stopped by their central offices, the lowest rate among the 10 cities Kastle monitors. The average among the 10 was 50 percent.

***TREND FORECAST:*** *Again, when we had forecast a major commercial office building calamity in 2020 when politicians launched the COVID War, closed down businesses and made people work from home, it was ignored by the mainstream media and those in the office building sector. Now they are paying the price... a price that will also crash many of the small and medium size banks that hold the loans for which they will not be paid. And, as we note, buildings built in the past 50 years are non-convertible for housing units.*

- *"THE NEW LIFE OF LOCKDOWN" (19 May 2020)*
- *"REMOTE WORK = COMMERCIAL BUST" (2 Jun 2020)*
- *"SLIDING VALUE OF OFFICE SPACE HITS URBAN CENTERS" (11 Aug 2020)*
- *"WORK FROM HOME, CITY REAL ESTATE DOWN" (20 Oct 2020)*
- *"OFFICE WORKERS STAY HOME" (8 Dec 2020)*
- *"RETURN TO OFFICES POSTPONED: COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE BUST?" (14 Sep 2021)*
- *"WORKERS STAYING HOME, COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE DISASTER LOOMING" (19 Oct 2021)*
- *"COVID WAR KEEPING WORKERS OUT OF THE OFFICE" (16 Nov 2021)*
- *"NYC BUSINESSES: BYE, BYE NYC" (16 Nov 2021)*
- *"Commercial Real Estate in a Tailspin" (20 Oct 2020)*
- *"Deloitte Abandons More London Office Space" (26 Apr 2022)*
- *"GM Softens Back-to-the-Office Requirement After Worker Backlash" (4 Oct 2022)*
- *"Business Office Bust Begins to Bite" (20 Dec 2022)*
- *"New York City's Workforce Sharply Shrinking" (24 Jan 2023)*
- *"Office Occupancy Half of What It Used to Be" (7 Feb 2023)*
- *"Plan to Turn New York's Vacant Hotels to Housing Not Working" (5 Apr 2022)*
- *"Wall Street, Dead Street. Office Buildings Going Condo" (28 Jun 2022).*
- *"Office Building Bust" (3 Jan 2023)*

# TRENDS ON THE GLOBAL ECONOMIC FRONT

## WHEN THE ECONOMY FALLS JOBS GO WITH IT

It's plain and simple. Across the globe, there are more and more forecasts for rising interest rates and more fears of recession. In this 44 of our job-cut report, the biggest job cuts are from the UBS banksters who are ready to fire some 35,000 Credit Suisse employees following its emergency takeover of the bank.

- Victoria University - 200
- Uber - 200
- Billings Clinic - 30
- Deutsche Bank - 10 percent, 1,700 (retail jobs)
- Axel Springer - 200 (citing AI)
- JPMorgan - 20
- Morgan Stanley - 3,000 (planned)
- Bloomberg - Unknown amount
- Victoria's Public Service - 4,000

- Accenture - 100’s
- AutoLiv - 11 percent, 8,000
- Deliveroo - 9 percent, 350
- Fielman - 100’s (planned)
- Highmark Health - 118
- Payoneer - 200
- Suncor - 1,500
- Robinhood - 7 percent
- KPMG - 5 percent, 1,950
- Under Armour - 50 (corporate)
- Illumina - 10 percent
- Brooklyn Academy of Music - 13 percent
- Ford - Unknown amount
- Carrefour - 1,000
- American Century Investments - 30
- O-I Glass is to layoff 70 percent of staff at its Portland facility
- Hi-Rez Studios- Rebranding, Some Layoffs
- Brooklyn Academy of Music - 26
- Convoy - Another round of layoffs?
- Payoneer ( International ) - 200
- Software giant Anaplan - Hundreds of layoffs
- GKN Aerospace - Layoffs begin Aug 25.
- Goldman Sachs - 125 Managing Directors
- EatStreet - 26
- Ouster - Unknown amount
- Intercept Pharmaceuticals - 33 percent
- BlackRock - less than 1 percent
- Entertainment One - 20 percent of staff
- Medifast Inc. - 83
- Microbiome-focused Federation Bio - Layoffs, No #
- The Billings Clinic - 25 to 30
- Highmark Health - 118
- Friday Health Plans - all 322 Colorado Employees
- EnerDel - Unknown amount
- Warner Bros. Discovery - Unknown amount

- AvantStay Property Manager - 37
- Olx Group ( International ) - 800
- Qualcomm - 415
- Badger Bus Lines - up to 200
- Hutchinson Technology. - 50
- Grab Holdings - 1,000

**GET READY FOR THE WORST: WORLDWIDE ECONOMIC SLOWDOWN**

Activity in the services economy in Australia, the Eurozone, and Japan fell more sharply than expected, according to purchasing managers indexes (PMIs) published last week by S&P Global, while manufacturing activity in key locales continued to be weak.

The Eurozone's overall PMI, combining factory and services activity, registered 50.3 this month, compared to 53.8 in May. Readings above 50 indicate expansion.

"This suggests that [Europe's] reopening boost to services activity is on its last legs, adding to the sluggish economic environment we're currently in," ING economist Bert Colijn told *The Wall Street Journal*.

"Another quarter of negative growth [in Europe] is becoming more likely," he added.

The U.S. service industry continued to expand but more slowly than in May.

U.S. manufacturing activity shrank as new orders dwindled.

***TREND FORECAST:*** *Economic activity is slowing in China, the Eurozone, and the U.S. Their economies are so thoroughly interlinked that the new data raises the odds of a global recession.*

## CENTRAL BANKS: NOW THE HARD PART BEGINS

Overall inflation has been falling in most countries in recent months as central banks have used higher interest rates to rein it back.

However, core inflation—which ignores changes in energy and food prices—has remained much more stubborn.

Europe's core inflation rate eased to 5.3 percent in May from 5.4 percent the month before. It had set a record at 5.7 percent in March of this year.

In the U.S., core inflation also dipped to 5.3 percent from 5.5 in April. It peaked last September at a 39-year high of 6.6 percent.

The final phase in central banks' struggle to pull core inflation back toward a 2-percent annual rate "is going to be harder," Carl Riccadonna, chief U.S. economist for BNP Paribas, told the *Financial Times*.

"It requires more pain and that likely involves a recession in the back half of the year," he said.

"The only way to get inflation down to 2 percent is to crush demand and slow the economy in a more substantial way," chief economist Torsten Slok at Apollo Global Management said in an *FT* interview.

Joachim Nagel, president of Germany's Bundesbank, last week called inflation "a very greedy beast" and argued in comments at a 23 June economic conference that putting a halt to interest rate increases would be "a first-order mistake."

In previous inflation cycles, central banks have stopped raising rates too soon and Europe must not make the same error, he warned.

Isabel Schnabel, a governor of the European Central Bank, agreed, saying Europe's "incredibly strong" jobs market and continuing inflation risks a wage-price spiral, in which the two chase each other higher.

Wages in the European Union grew by 5 percent in this year's first quarter, more than twice the historical average, while the jobless rate sat at a record low of 6.5 percent in April.

"If, as we have seen in the first quarter, productivity growth remains negative or does not recover, then there is a risk that this could turn into a wage-price spiral," she added.

Previous wage-price spirals have proven very difficult to break.

Banks have assumed that companies will cut their margins to control costs and beat back inflation, "but that is uncertain," Schnabel acknowledged.

In fact, it is increasingly unlikely.

Companies have been found guilty of "greedflation"—jacking consumer prices beyond the rate of inflation to protect their margins and profits, as we explained in "'Greedflation' Fuels Inflation" (30 May 2023).

"The process of getting inflation down to 2 percent has a long way to go," U.S. Federal Reserve chair Jerome Powell said in 21 June Congressional testimony.

American markets are pricing in another quarter-point Fed rate hike next month, which would raise the rates to 5.25 percent on deposits and 5.5 percent for loans.

Europe's financial markets also are betting on central bank rate bumps in July and September.

***TREND FORECAST:*** *The hawks are winning: central banks in many Western nations will continue to raise rates in the weeks ahead.*

*Each hike will push national economies deeper into Dragflation, one of our Top 2022 Trends, in which prices rise while economic productivity declines.*

*Because it takes time for rate hikes to work their way through an economy, it is now increasingly likely that central banks will raise interest rates enough to throw Western economies into a recession that, in turn, will drag down the rest of the world.*

## IMF DEVELOPING GLOBAL DIGITAL CURRENCY PLATFORM

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) is developing a platform that central banks' digital currencies (CBDCs) can use to clear transactions between countries, executive director Kristalina Georgieva announced on 19 June.

The currencies "should not be fragmented national propositions," she said. "To have more efficient and fairer transactions, we need systems that connect countries. We need interoperability."

"At the IMF, we are working on the concept of a global CBDC platform," she added. "If countries develop CBDCs only for domestic deployment, we are underutilizing their capacity."

If CBDC transactions are not smooth and easy between countries, that would create a vacuum likely to be filled by private cryptocurrencies, she warned.

CBDCs are issued, backed, and controlled by central banks, while cryptocurrencies are backed by nothing but market whims and are a "speculative investment," Georgieva said.

About 10 countries already have established CBDCs, with at least 100 more at some stage of development, Georgieva noted.

***TREND FORECAST:*** *This is old news to* ***Trends Journal*** *subscribers since we had forecast back in March of 2020 that the world would be going "FROM DIRTY CASH, TO DIGITAL TRASH," and we have been detailing why they are doing it and the implications. Here are just a few of our CBDC trends analysis and:*

- *"A PRIMER ON BLOCKCHAINING: THE TECHNOLOGY BEHIND DIGITAL CURRENCY" (14 Sep 2017)*
- *"DIGITAL CURRENCY FUTURES" (3 Dec 2019)*
- *"MORE ON DIRTY CASH TO DIGITAL TRASH" (21 Jul 2020)*
- *"IT'S OFFICIAL: DIRTY CASH TO DIGITAL TRASH" (28 Jul 2020)*
- *"FED RELEASES DIGITAL DOLLAR REPORT: GOING CRYPTO?" (25 Jan 2022)*
- *"CONGRESS PUSHES FED TO SPEED CREATION OF DIGITAL DOLLAR" (16 Aug 2022)*
- *"U.S. TREASURY PUSHING FOR DIGITAL DOLLAR" (20 Sep 2022)*
- *"TOP TREND 2023: DIRTY CASH TO DIGITAL TRASH" (3 Jan 2023)*
- *"TOP TREND, FROM DIRTY CASH TO DIGITAL TRASH: DIGITAL CURRENCIES ARE COMING" (24 Jan 2023)*
- *"SPOTLIGHT, TOP TREND 2023: FROM DIRTY CASH TO DIGITAL TRASH" (7 Mar 2023)*
- *"CRYPTO OWNERSHIP WIDER THAN THOUGHT, STUDIES SHOW" (13 Jan 2023)*
- *"HOW CRYPTO IS CREATING ITS OWN AI ECOSYSTEM" (30 May 2023)*
- *"CRYPTO WALLETS FOR NFTS MIGHT BE COMING WITH A FUTURE ETHEREUM UPGRADE" (6 Jun 2023)*
- *"U.S. GOVERNMENT HIT BY CYBER ATTACKS, WATCH FOR NEW DIGITAL CURRENCY PUSH" (20 Jun 2023)*
- *"NEW CONGRESSIONAL BILL: CRYPTO WON'T BE UNLEASHED UNTIL GENSLER IS CAGED" (20 Jun 2023)*

## EU LOSES CONFIDENCE IN CHINA'S ECONOMIC POWER

European businesses are less confident in China's economy now that its expected post-COVD economic boom has busted and its relations with Europe and the U.S. are deteriorating, according to a survey by the European Union Chamber of Commerce in China.

Doing business with China has become harder over the past 12 months, about two-thirds of businesses said, a 4-point increase from the poll a year ago.

Another 11 percent reported shifting, or planning to shift, investments out of China. An additional 7 percent said they might do so.

Although there is not yet a tide of companies abandoning the Asian giant, "stakeholders in China should worry about the direction" the poll indicates, chamber president Jens Eskelund said in a statement announcing the survey results.

The European Commission has formulated a new economic security strategy that calls on countries to impose stricter controls on European investments in countries that could pose a security risk to the region.

China and Russia are not specified in the strategy statement but are seen as the primary risks, *The Wall Street Journal* noted.

***TREND FORECAST:*** *Again, as we have extensively detailed in previous* ***Trends Journals****, China's COVID War and zero-COVID policy has destroyed the lives and livelihoods of hundreds of millions of its people. And as we recently saw when U.S. Secretary State Antony Blinken visited Beijing, the photographs show everyone around him and China's President Xi were all masked up... still fighting COVID.*

*Despite China's attempts to pump cheap money into its system to rejuvenate its economy, doubts persist as to when and if its economy will gain pre-COVID War strength. It will take considerable time to demonstrate a consistently positive business climate that can restore confidence.*

*China's foreign trade will decline further into the future, both because Western companies look for friendlier and more reliable manufacturing sources and because of the global economic funk. However, with its yen weakening, its products will be a lot cheaper to buy from countries with stronger currencies.*

*Also, as the West ramps up its tension with China, Beijing is, and will continue to tighten and expand trade links with its Asian partners, such as India and Vietnam. Those closer trade ties will foster political alliances, dividing the world more sharply into Eastern and Western camps.*

# SPOTLIGHT: EUROPE'S ECONOMIC CRISIS

## EUROZONE BUSINESS ACTIVITY CONTINUES TO WEAKEN

Business activity in the 20-country Eurozone continued to slow this month after the region fell into a technical recession during this year's first quarter, as we reported in "Eurozone in Recession" (13 Jun 2023).

This month's purchasing managers combined index (PMI) measuring activity in manufacturing and services registered 50.3, falling from 52.8 in May and below analysts' forecast of 52.5.

Rankings above 50 indicate expanding economic activity.

Fewer orders are coming to factories, slowing employment growth for the second consecutive month.

High interest rates and overall economic weakness cut Germany's median home price by 6.8 percent in this year's first quarter.

The annual price decline in Europe's largest housing market was the sharpest since records began being kept in 2000. The country's rate of new home construction has sunk to its lowest since 2007, the *Financial Times* said.

The Eurozone's weakness "is a severe slowdown," Carsten Brzeski, an ING economist, told the *FT*. "It shows the European Central Bank's (ECB's) forecasts were utterly over-optimistic."

The zone's economy will expand by 0.9 percent this year, the ECB has predicted.

“We’re clearly heading for another weak quarter, with a possible flirtation with recession again,” he added.

After the disappointing PMI news, bond traders reduced their odds that the ECB will raise its interest rate again in September. The yield on Germany’s two-year bond fell 1.3 percentage points. The euro lost another 0.6 percent against the dollar, landing at $1.089 on 23 June.

The euro closed at $1.09 on 26 June.

***TREND FORECAST:*** *The higher the ECB raises interest rates, the deeper the Eurozone economy will move into recession. However, with the summer tourist season just beginning and still strong pent up travel demand, while there will still be weakness in manufacturing sectors, there will be growth in the service sector which will temporarily increase GDPs. However, should interest rates continue to rise, when autumn sets in, economies will resume their decline.*

**GERMANY’S WEAKNESS DRAGS DOWN EUROZONE ECONOMY**

Germany, Europe’s largest economy, has been the main driver of the region’s growth. Now, however, the nation has become “the biggest drag on Europe’s economy,” *The Wall Street Journal* said.

Germany’s economy shrank by 0.5 percent in this year’s first quarter, compared to just a 0.1-percent decline in the Eurozone overall. It was the only country in the G20 group of leading nations, other than Russia, to see an economic contraction for the period.

The U.S. economy added 1.6 percent over that time.

Europe has relied on Germany’s humming factories to pull up weaker or unpredictable areas of the region’s economy, such as tourism. Now that is not happening.

Shoppers stocked up on electronics, autos, and other top-quality German products during and shortly after the COVID War. However, the world has now shifted its focus of spending from goods to services.

Also, the world's economy is stagnating, cutting global demand for factories' output as Germany confronts structural problems in its economy.

"In times of weak global demand, Germany is just not competitive," Matthias Zachert, CEO of German chemicals maker Lanxess, told the *WSJ*.

Factories' costs soared in 2021 and 2022 as Russia curtailed natural gas shipments to the continent and then Western sanctions against Russia sent prices even higher.

With energy costs still high and global consumer demand slowing, production at Germany's most energy-intensive factories was 12.9 percent lower in April than a year earlier, the *WSJ* reported.

In contrast, factory production grew slightly across the Eurozone overall in the same month.

China was partly responsible for Germany's shortfall.

The Asian giant is a key customer for a significant portion of German technology. After a brief economic surge early this year when anti-COVID measures were lifted, China's economy has run out of steam.

Chinese officials have engaged in a series of emergency meetings to try to revive both production and consumption, as we reported in "China Convenes 'Urgent' Meetings Over Stalled Economy" (20 Jun 2023).

Germany's factories employ a larger proportion of the workforce than in many other countries. Ten percent of German workers labor in factories; in the U.S., the share is half that.

Germany also has become used to booking an export surplus every year. However, that surplus began to dwindle in 2016 as China's manufacturing prowess grew.

In 2022, the surplus was the smallest since 2000, according to the government's statistics office.

***TREND FORECAST:*** *Germany is the world's fourth most productive nation in manufacturing. As the world economy winds down, its ability to prop up Europe's economy will dwindle, dropping the region into recession.*

*Once Europe's recession begins, it will last longer than previous ones because Germany's factories will lack the orders to lift the region back into the black.*

*And as we note in this* ***Trends Journal,*** *the German people are losing faith in the established government and are moving toward populist, rather than globalist political parties. (See "'FAR-RIGHT' SURGES IN GERMANY AMID ECONOMIC UNCERTAINTY, AS WE LONG FORECAST" in this issue.).*

*Signaling more recession ahead, according to Munich's Ifo institute for economic research, the business climate index for Germany dropped to 88.5 this month from 91.5 in May... which was a deeper-than-expected decline. Ifo president Clemens Fuest said, "Sentiment in the German economy has clouded over noticeably."*

## U.K. INFLATION RATE UNCHANGED IN MAY: HOME OWNERS TO SUFFER

Great Britain's annual inflation rate remained at 8.7 percent in May, matching April's pace, according to the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

In contrast, Eurozone inflation was 6.1 percent during the period; prices rose 4.0 percent in the U.S.

Economists had expected the U.K's rate to ease slightly.

Prices for food and nonalcoholic drinks shot up 18.1 percent in May on an annual basis.

Also, wages grew faster than expected last month. Inflation in the services sector ran at 7.1 percent, up from 6.9 percent in April, due largely to employers needing to pay workers more, ONS chief economist Grant Fitzner said in comments quoted by *The New York Times*.

“It can take longer for [services inflation] to pick up but likewise longer for them to unwind,” he noted.

Core inflation—which ignores energy and food costs—galloped at 7.1 percent in May, the fastest annual rate since 1992, the *NYT* said.

“This is a disappointing set of numbers that shows broad-based strength” in prices, Investec economist Sandra Horsfield wrote in a note.

“Broad-based strength” indicates that inflation is embedded throughout the U.K. economy.

Prices were sticking higher because of Britain’s exit from the Eurozone, soaring energy prices through much of 2022, and Western sanctions against Russia following its invasion of Ukraine, analysts said.

The news that inflation was stuck came a day before the Bank of England (BoE) ratcheted up its key interest rate by a half point to 5.0 percent.

Futures traders are pricing in a 6-percent rate by the end of this year.

The higher rate puts even more pressure on more than two million Brits with adjustable-rate mortgages due to refinance their loans over the next 18 months.

The interest rate for a two-year fixed-rate mortgage loan, not uncommon in the U.K., reached 6 percent earlier this month for the first time this year.

About 1.3 million U.K. households are due to refinance their short-term mortgage loans this year. Payments for fixed-rate mortgages will rise from an average of £700 to £1,000, the National Institute of Economic and Social Research (NIESR) calculated; the average variable-rate payment will rise from £450 to £700.

“The rise in interest rates to 5 percent will push millions of households with mortgages to the brink of insolvency,” NIESR economist Max Mosley warned in a public statement.

The new rate also will erase the savings of 1.2 million British households, other analysts warned.

The problem is “the mortgage bomb about to go off,” Jake Berry, a Conservative member of parliament said in the House of Commons on 20 June.

And while Downing Street negotiated an agreement with U.K. banks to halt home foreclosures for 12 months and to lengthen the life of many mortgages without damaging borrowers’ credit ratings, when the time is up the mortgage rates will rise and so too with the foreclosures.

Homeowners also have the option of paying mortgage interest only for six months.

“We know this is hard—many people with mortgages or loans will be understandably worried about what this means for them,” BoE governor Andrew Bailey said in a public statement, “but if we don’t raise rates now, it could be worse later.”

“We are committed to returning inflation to the 2-percent target and will make the decisions necessary to achieve that,” he added.

In January, prime minister Rishi Sunak pledged that his government would cut inflation in half by 2024, which would mean bringing the rate to about 5 percent.

***TREND FORECAST:*** *The European Union is Britain’s largest trading partner. As the continent tips toward recession, the U.K. will follow—but Britain’s recession is likely to be deeper and last longer because it will begin from a worse footing.*

*And what is not being reported by any of the media is that politicians caused this hardship when they launched the COVID War and destroyed the lives and livelihoods of their nations and made a bad situation worse when they launched sanctions against Russia which drove up inflation.*

# UKRAINE WAR TREND UPDATE

## U.S., BRITAIN 'FULLY DRAGGED' INTO UKRAINE WAR IF THEIR EQUIPMENT IS USED TO STRIKE CRIMEA

Russian Defense minister Sergey Shoigu said Russian intelligence indicates that Ukraine is coming up with plans to use U.S. and U.K.-made artillery to strike Crimea, a move that would further not only escalate the Ukraine War, but it would officially put the U.S. and U.K. at war with Russia.

Shoigu noted that Kyiv would use U.S. HIMARS and British Storm Shadow cruise missiles to attack Crimea. He said if Ukraine uses these missiles in such an attack, it will mean the U.S. and Britain "would be fully dragged into the conflict and would entail immediate strikes on decision-making centers in Ukraine," indicating that Zelensky and his team would be targeted.

Video emerged last week that showed a missile hitting a bridge linking southern Ukraine to Crimea, and Russia said British missiles were used. Thus, while Ukraine did

not claim responsibility for the strikes, considering the recent strike on an ammunition depot in Kherson, Kyiv was blamed for the strike as a means to impede Russia's ability to resupply troops.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has repeated that his country will not stop the fight until "we return the Ukrainian flag to every corner of Ukraine," which he said includes Crimea.

***TRENDPOST:*** *Victoria "Fuck the EU" Nuland, who was a major player in the U.S.-led coup in Ukraine back in 2014, called Crimea a legitimate target for Ukrainian forces. (See "VICTORIA 'FUCK THE EU' NULAND CALLS CRIMEA A LEGITIMATE TARGET FOR UKRAINE, ANGERS KREMLIN" 21 Feb 2023.)*

*Nuland said the U.S. supported Ukrainian strikes on these targets because Washington believes Kyiv is "owed and due all of their territory within their international borders," which she said included Crimea.*

*"Ukraine is not going to be safe unless Crimea is—at a minimum, at a minimum—demilitarized," she said.*

Russia has been angered by the advanced weapons that the U.S. and U.K. have been providing Ukraine for its arsenal, including U.S.-made HIMARS and British Storm Shadow long-range, air-launched cruise missiles. These missiles have a range of nearly 200 miles, which eclipses the U.S.-provided HIMARS that have a 50-mile range.

The U.S. missiles were also reportedly modified so they cannot reach deep inside Russia.

***TRENDPOST:*** *The U.S. has, thus far, refused to provide its Army Tactical Missile System, or ATACMS, that has about the same range. We have reported extensively on how the U.S. has approved weapons for Ukraine that were once unthinkable. (See "UKRAINE'S 'DREAM' COMES TRUE, RECEIVES NATO PATRIOT MISSILES FOR AIR DEFENSE" 25 Apr 2023, "SPAIN, U.S. GET TANKS READY FOR UKRAINE IN ANTICIPATION OF NEW OFFENSIVE" 25 Apr 2023 and "U.S. AT WAR WITH RUSSIA:*

*WASHINGTON PROVIDES COORDINATES FOR UKRAINIAN HIMARS STRIKES, REPORT SAYS.")*

*Russia has said that Western countries are not waging a proxy war with Russia and—through weapons transfers, training, and intelligence—are actively waging war with Moscow. (See "READY TO DIE FOR UKRAINE? RUSSIA WARNS OF NUCLEAR ANNIHILATION" 28 Feb 2023, "RFK JR. AGREES WITH CELENTE: U.S. PUSHED RUSSIA INTO UKRAINE WAR" 9 May 2023, "PUTIN: NATO/U.S. AT WAR WITH RUSSIA" 21 Feb 2023 and "RUSSIA: U.S. CONDUCTING 'TOTAL' HYBRID WAR, PUTTING TWO NUCLEAR POWERS ON PATH TO CLASH" 14 Feb 2023.)*

*Last week, Barack Obama, the former U.S. president, explained some of the history between Russia and Ukraine and how the peninsula was annexed by Russia in 2014, while he was president without much of a response from the Western world.*

*"There's a reason there was not an armed invasion of Crimea, because Crimea was full of a lot of Russian speakers and there was some sympathy to the views that Russia was representing," he said.*

*Obama conveniently left out how Kyiv reportedly deployed some 125,000 troops and heavy artillery in the war-torn-disputed Donbass region before the current war and how Zelensky admitted last year that his country was involved in an eight-year conflict in the Donbas between Russian separatists that resulted in the death of over 14,000 people.*

*Ukraine has long accused Russia of providing weapons and troops to these separatists in Donbas, a charge that Russia denied. Moscow, in response, accused Kyiv of committing a "genocide" against the pro-Russian separatists in the region, which Ukraine denied. (See "ZELENSKY ADMITS TO 'EIGHT YEARS OF WAR' IN DONBAS—BUT IGNORED BY PRESSTITUTES AND POLITICIANS," 2 Aug 2022.)*

*Dmitry Peskov, the Kremlin spokesman, was asked about Obama's comments and said, "from time to time such rational thinking finds its way out [in the US]," RT, the Russian outlet, reported.*

***TRENDPOST:*** *Kyiv has good reason to deny any involvement because Moscow could consider the strike an attack on Russia. Dmitry Medvedev, the deputy chairman of the Security Council of Russia, warned last August that "Judgment Day will instantly await" for anyone who targets the peninsula.*

*Zelensky says, "This Russian war against Ukraine and against the entire free Europe began with Crimea and must end with Crimea—with its liberation" and that "Crimea is Ukrainian, and we will never give it up."*

*It should be noted that, despite the continuing Western line, Russia did not attack Crimea in 2014. The Russian military already had a presence there. Under a lease agreement (which did not expire until 2047), negotiated when Russia granted independence to Ukraine, its Black Sea Fleet is based at Sevastopol port in Crimea.*

*Furthermore, Crimea would likely still be a part of Ukraine if the U.S. had not orchestrated a coup to overthrow the government of the democratically elected president of Ukraine, Viktor Yanukovych. (See "WASHINGTON IS DRIVING THE WORLD TO THE FINAL WAR," 28 Apr 2014).*

*It was Crimeans who voted overwhelmingly—by 95 percent—to rejoin Russia, but it is internationally recognized as Ukrainian territory. The Kremlin sees Crimea as theirs.*

*Crimea had been part of Ukraine only since 1954, when Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev, a Ukrainian, designated it as such. In fact, Crimea has been part of Russia longer than the United States has been a country.*

**DESPITE STALEMATE, ZELENSKY KEEPS HIS WESTERN-BACKERS HAPPY, SAYS HIS FORCES ARE 'ACTIVELY DESTROYING THE ENEMY'**

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky last week must have made his Western-backers happy when he told reporters that his forces were "actively destroying" Russian troops positioned in his country.

"A defense against terror means destroying terrorists," Zelensky said, according to German outlet DW. "And it is guaranteed that the state of evil will never have the opportunity to bring evil to Ukraine."

Zelensky used his nightly video message to Ukrainians on Tuesday to assure them that troops in the country's south and east "are actively destroying the enemy, physically cleansing Ukraine."

The Ukrainian president told reporters that the counteroffensive has been a tough slog but his forces lost no ground.

"We have no lost positions, only liberated ones," he said. "They have only losses."

Zelesnky said it will not be long before Ukrainian flags fly "all over our south and all over our east."

Ukraine said it managed to retake eight villages and the main thrust has yet to occur.

Mykhailo Podolyak, a top adviser for Zelensky, posted on Twitter that the "counteroffensive is not a new season of a Netflix show. There is no need to expect action and buy popcorn."

Hanna Maliar, Ukraine's deputy defense minister, told Reuters that the "main events" of the counteroffensive are "ahead of us."

"And the main blow is still to come. Indeed, some of the reserves - these are staged things - will be activated later," she said.

***TRENDPOST:*** *It is important for Zelensky to stay on script and dehumanize all Russians as some kind of sub-human species who need to be neutralized because they pose a threat to the entire free world because…they're Russians.*

*Indeed, this is a replay of the Vietnam War "domino theory" when Americans were told that if they did not stop the commies from taking over Vietnam, like falling domino's all of Asia would be conquered by the communist and before you know it, those dominoes would be falling on the coast of California.*

***Ignorance is Bliss***

*There's a video that was ignored by the Western media that showed Daddy's Boy George W. Bush on a prank call. The former president was under the impression he was talking to Zelensky—who at the time was about at his summit of popularity. Bush could be seen telling "Zelensky" that his job is to "destroy as many Russian troops as you can."*

*Indeed, to see what an ignorant fool Bush is and how as President he destroyed not only the freedom of the American people with his War on Terror, but also killed millions in his Afghan and Iraq wars that cost trillions, watch this video.*

***TREND FORECAST:*** *As we had forecast before the Ukraine War began, Russia will defeat Ukraine. And now Ukrainian forces find themselves in a war of attrition with Russia and there's still no end in sight. (See "UKRAINE'S COUNTEROFFENSIVE: A BLOODY MESS, WILL KYIV GO NUCLEAR?" 20 Jun 2023, "LONG-ANTICIPATED COUNTEROFFENSIVE UNDERWAY IN UKRAINE: THE WINNER IS?" 13 Jun 2023 and "ZELENSKY: WE'RE READY FOR LONG-WAITED COUNTEROFFENSIVE" 6 Jun 2023.)*

*Oleksandr Syrskyi, the commander of Ukraine's ground forces, said in the Reuters report that the "main force" has not engaged in battle yet.*

*"We are now searching, probing for weak places in the enemy defenses. Everything is still ahead," he said.*

**COMEDIAN ZELENSKY ADMITS COUNTEROFFENSIVE IS FAILING, SAYS IT'S NOT A MOVIE**

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky—who has benefited from Hollywood adulation that included made-for-the-camera visits by Ben Stiller, Sean Penn, and Orlando Bloom—admitted last week that the long-anticipated counteroffensive is faltering and reminded reporters the war is not a Hollywood movie.

"Some people believe this is a Hollywood movie and expect results now. It's not," he said, after admitting that military operations are progressing "slower than desired."

"What's at stake is people's lives," he said.

***TRENDPOST:*** *While western mainstream media outlets presented Russian forces as insufficient and unprofessional at the beginning of weeks of the war,* ***The Trends Journal*** *took the unpopular position and urged Ukraine to negotiate for peace because its military was completely outmatched by Russian forces. (See "PUTIN BLAMES UKRAINE FOR A FREEZE IN PEACE TALKS, TELLS EU LEADERS MOSCOW IS READY TO NEGOTIATE" 31 May 2022, "ZELENSKY REJECTS PEACE PROPOSAL, SAYS UKRAINE WILL BEAT RUSSIA" 31 May 2022, "WEAPONS POURING INTO UKRAINE, NO TALK OF PEACE, JUST MORE AMMUNITION" 12 Apr 2022 and "U.S. WAR HAWKS ON THE HUNT FOR PUTIN" 22 Mar 2022.)*

*Gerald Celente, who has voiced his opposition to Russia's decision to invade, has likened the conflict to an armed home-invader: if you're a homeowner and can meet*

*this intruder with deadly force, pursuing a confrontation is sensible. But if you are unarmed and untrained, the best option would be to neutralize the threat by negotiating.*

*In Ukraine's case, the help will never come.*

*Kyiv will never be made a full member of NATO and the West will just provide Ukraine with more weapons in hopes to achieve its stated goals to weaken Russia.*

**Russia Stops Playing Games**

Russia turned the contested territory in the country's east into a minefield and its air superiority has turned the counteroffensive into a bloodbath. Russian troops are protected by highly fortified positions.

Two western officials and a senior U.S. military official told CNN that the counteroffensive is "not meeting expectations on any front."

The CNN report said U.S. officials will reassess the counteroffensive in July.

Hanna Maliar, the Ukrainian deputy defense minister, told reporters last week that they recaptured about 44 square miles of territory since the new offensive began.

"The Russians are putting up a furious resistance," she admitted.

Sergey Shoigu, Maliar's Russian counterpart, said Ukraine launched 263 attacks against Russian positions since 4 June, and all attacks have been crushed.

"Thanks to the smart and selfless actions of our units, all of them [the attacks] have been repelled. The enemy has not accomplished its goals," he said, according to RT.

Two German defense experts said in an interview with the German public-service television broadcaster ZDF that Ukraine has, thus far, seized land that is not very important, according to RT.

Russia has been employing a remote-controlled mine system to protect its forces, has been using “extremely intense electronic warfare” to jam up radio communication systems, and—since the dam bombing—was able to consolidate forces and defend less territory, they said.

The two said Ukraine has only sent a small percentage of its forces, so the main thrust of the counteroffensive has not been implemented, they said.

Ukraine claimed that Russia has lost about 4,600 troops and Moscow said Kyiv lost about 13,000 fighters.

“Additional military hardware can certainly be delivered, but the mobilization reserve is not unlimited. And it seems Ukraine’s Western allies are indeed prepared to wage the war to the last Ukrainian,” Putin said, according to RT, the Russian news outlet.

***TRENDPOST:*** *While the Western media continues to look for ways to protect Zelensky, the counteroffensive continues to falter. Putin told reporters that Ukraine has no chance of defeating his forces.*

*“Thanks to the courage and heroism of our fighters, thanks to the commanders’ readiness to repel any aggressive actions against Russia, I believe the enemy doesn't stand a chance,” Putin said. “They understand that and this is why they have stalled now.”*

*Putin made the comment while addressing military college graduates and he said there is a current “lull” in the war because Ukraine cannot sustain the amount of casualties that it's been absorbing. The Russian President said there was sporadic gunfire and attacks but “there is currently no active offensive.”*

*The Western media has already given a glimpse of how it will respond if the counteroffensive is a major flop. The New York Times ran a headline that read: “Battling Russia, Ukrainian Leaders Also Fight High Expectations.”*

*What high expectations?*

*Jake Sullivan, Biden's national security adviser, said earlier this month that Ukraine will not be graded on its war effort.*

**ZELENSKY: U.S. HAS 2 CHOICES IF UKRAINE IS DEFEATED: WATCH THE DEMISE OF NATO, OR GO TO WAR**

When someone famous for playing the piano with his penis as a sitcom star and becomes President of Ukraine makes a warning, it's best you listen.

Volodymyr Zelensky, the Ukrainian president, said last week that the U.S. will be faced with two bleak choices if Kyiv loses the war with Russia.

He said the U.S. could either decide to join the fight or sit back and watch NATO, the alliance that has been around since 1949, unravel.

Zelensky made the comment after being asked about the possibility that the 2024 presidential election in the U.S. could result in someone less willing than President Joe Biden to bankroll Ukrainians.

Zelensky, who needs to rely on fear tactics, said, "Is he ready to go to war? To fight, to send his kids? Are they ready to die? Because anyway, they will have to do this if NATO gets involved."

He—once again—presented Ukraine as a bulwark between Europe and Russia. He said if Kyiv falls, Russia will continue its bloody march to the Baltic countries and Poland.

"They will start war with one of the NATO countries and at this moment the U.S. will have to choose the collapse of NATO or go to war," he said.

Zelensky confirmed last week that his country is not ready to negotiate for a peaceful resolution with Russia—and said peace is not an option until Moscow withdraws all its troops.

***TRENDPOST:*** *Zelensky is trying to sell the Vietnam-era Domino theory to act as though Russian tanks will head to Poland once conquering Kyiv, which is nothing more than comments from a desperate leader clawing for continued Western support. (See "NATO'S STOLTENBERG VOWS TO SUPPORT UKRAINE UNTIL VICTORY OVER RUSSIA" 25 Apr 2023, "MEDVEDEV BRUSHES OFF POLISH PM'S CLAIM THAT NATO WOULD QUICKLY DEFEAT RUSSIA" 18 Apr 2023 and "LEAKED DOCS CONFIRM REPORTS NATO TROOPS ARE ON THE GROUND IN UKRAINE" 18 Apr 2023.)*

*Of course, Zelensky is not the first person to float the idea that Russia is looking to dominate Europe. Earlier this year, Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte said in an interview that if Russian President Vladimir Putin is not stopped and able to "go about his business, it won't end with Ukraine. The whole West is threatened."*

*Latvian President Egils Levits has said, "Only when Ukraine will have liberated the whole territory then there would be peace. And we are all interested in peace, a lasting peace."*

## AS U.S. INFRASTRUCTURE ROTS, U.S. KEEPS UKRAINE WAR ROLLING AS 'BIGS' CASH IN WITH WAR PROFITS

Still optimistic that there will eventually be a country to reconstruct, the U.S. announced last week that it will provide Ukraine with another $1.3 billion for its post-war rebuilding effort, while insisting that ultimately Russia will be handed the bill.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said last week that the U.S. is prepared to spend about $520 million to assist in Ukraine's energy-infrastructure overhaul that has been gutted in Russian strikes.

"As Russia continues to destroy, we are here to help Ukraine rebuild… rebuild lives, rebuild its country, rebuild its future," Blinken said, according to the AFP. He drew applause from the audience when he said Russia will eventually "bear the cost of Ukraine's reconstruction."

The report noted that the funding is in addition to the $63 billion the U.S. has injected into the Ukrainian economy since the start of the war.

Besides the $520 million for energy improvements, $657 million will go to repairing Ukrainian rail lines, border crossings, and other infrastructure projects.

Bullshit Blinken assured the committee that the U.S. will somehow monitor to make sure the money is going where it is intended and prevent the formation of monopolies.

Foreign donors have pledged $66 billion for Ukraine's rebuilding effort. The World Bank's latest estimate is that it will cost more than $400 billion for reconstruction. Reports noted that the estimate is likely a low-ball figure because it was released before the Kakhovka dam attack.

Volodymyr Zelensky, the president of Ukraine, recently used Bakhmut as an example of the physical loss in the country.

"You have to understand that there is nothing," said Zelensky, "They've destroyed everything. There are no buildings."

***TRENDPOST:*** *Nearly 500 companies from 42 countries want in on this rebuilding effort because there's big money to be made.*

***The Trends Journal*** *has long said war is good for business, and a newly released OMG (O'Keefe Media Group) video helps to prove our point.*

*Serge Varlay, a recruiter for BlackRock, told an undercover journalist that Ukraine is good for business, according to a video.*

*"Ukraine is good for business, you know that right," he said in the video. "I'll give an example. Russia blows up Ukraine's grain silos, the price of wheat's gonna go mad up. The Ukrainian economy is tied very largely to the wheat market, global wheat market. Prices of bread, you know, literally, everything goes up and down. This is fantastic if you're trading. Volatility creates opportunity to make profit. War is real fucking good for business."*

*It is also worth noting that amid all these goodwill gestures from the collective West, Ukraine is still not a member of the EU and NATO. Al Jazeera reported that Ukraine is a "country long plagued by graft," as though it was inflicted with a medical condition.*

*Large-scale corruption in Ukraine is as old as the country itself.*

*Transparency International's 2021 Corruption Perception Index ranked Ukraine 122nd out of 180 countries and is considered the second most corrupt in Europe. Russia comes in 136th place.*

*Zelensky, a law-degree-carrying comedian who played the Ukrainian president on a TV show, ran for office in 2019 and vowed to work to clean up the crony capitalism and corruption in Kyiv. The show was called "Servant of the People."*

***TRENDPOST:** It is worth reminding our readers how the U.S. infrastructure is in a state of disrepair. Take a train ride from Penn Station in New York to Union Station in Washington and just look out the window. (See "U.S. INFRASTRUCTURE: A ROTTING JOKE," 1 Feb 2022).*

*Blinken's heroics in London come days after part of the I-95, which connects the Houlton-Woodstock Border Crossing in Maine to Miami, Florida, collapsed in Philadelphia after a truck crash burned through support beams on the portion of the elevated road.*

*Days after his announcement, a bridge in Montana collapsed, sending freight train cars—loaded with chemicals—into the Yellowstone River. Asphalt and molten sulfur cargo leaked into the water, The New York Times reported. Two cars were carrying sodium hydrosulfite. There's been no word on contamination.*

*In February, a Norfolk Southern freight train derailed in East Palestine, Ohio, resulting in the release of vinyl chloride, a toxic chemical. Residents in the area reported a number of ailments, including rashes, nausea, and difficulty breathing.*

*A lawsuit noted that animals are mysteriously dying up to 20 miles from the crash site after the controlled burn of vinyl chloride to prevent a major explosion. The chemical is used to make hard plastic resin and can increase the risk of liver cancer and others. (See "OHIO TOXIC TRAIN WRECK MAKING PEOPLE SICK" 21 Feb 2023.)*

*It is also worth noting that the U.S. and U.K. aim to steal Russian money and deliver it to Zelensky for the rebuilding process. (See "STEAL RUSSIAN MONEY AND GIVE IT TO ZELENSKY, U.S. SAYS," 20 Jun 2023.)*

*The U.K. announced that it also wants to keep $300 billion worth of Russian assets unless Moscow agrees to pay for Ukraine's rebuilding effort. We've noted that there's great risk in using central banks to seize assets and the euro's value could suffer.*

## WAGNER GROUP MOVES ON MOSCOW AS WEST TRIES TO PORTRAY PUTIN AS UNDER FIRE DOMESTICALLY

The only way that Russia can "lose" the Ukraine War is if there is an internal uprising, so when reports emerged on Friday that Yevgeny Prigozhin was advancing on Moscow with his mercenary forces and the Kremlin was in chaos, it was music to the Presstitute media's ears.

Did Russian President Vladimir Putin flee Moscow? Will there be a showdown at the Kremlin? Kyiv officials took to social media to poke fun at the internal turmoil and tweeted that they were running out of popcorn while they watched the events unfold.

None of that happened, and as fast as stories emerged about Prigozhin's advancements, the uprising ended and Prigozhin was exiled to Belarus. He will not face any prosecution and his forces who did not support the upheaval will get the chance to join the Russian military, according to the Associated Press.

Prigozhin was seen as a close Putin ally with little respect for the Russian military leadership, who he considers fickle and more interested in status than carrying out a successful military operation.

The *Financial Times* portrayed Prigozhin as angered that Putin is being fed inaccurate information from his top military brass. A newly released video on Telegram showed the chief mercenary accusing Russian military leadership of tricking Putin into invading its neighbor to prove the strength of the Russian military and bolster their own status.

"The defense ministry is trying to deceive the president and society by saying Ukraine was going mad with aggression and was planning to attack us together with the whole NATO bloc," Prigozhin said. "The war was needed ... so that [Minister of Defense Sergei] Shoigu could become a marshal ... so that he could get a second 'Hero' (of Russia) medal. The war wasn't needed to demilitarize or denazify Ukraine," he said.

He continued, "For some reason, this bunch of idiots thought they were so smart as that nobody would understand what they were up to or stop them on their way to Kyiv," he said, according to the *FT.*

The AP reported that Prigozhin's forces were cheered in Rostov-on-Don—where they took over military installations—but the momentum did not continue because he did not get the support from the Russian security services.

**Cracks Emerge**

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Sunday that the coup attempt raised "profound questions."

"It shows real cracks," he told CBS News. "We can't speculate or know exactly where that's gonna go. We do know that Putin has a lot more to answer for in the weeks and months ahead."

Blinken continued, "Sixteen months ago, Russian forces were on the doorstep of Kiev in Ukraine, thinking they'd take the city in a matter of days, thinking they would erase Ukraine from the map as an independent country. Now over this weekend, they've had to defend Moscow, Russia's capital, against mercenaries of Putin's own making."

Oleksiy Danilov, the head of Ukraine's National Security and Defense Council, said the war essentially started in 2014 when Russia annexed Crimea and the war would make a full circle, according to *The New York Times.*

"As the war began, so it will end—inside Russia," he posted on Twitter. "The process has begun."

Aleksandar Vucic, the Serbian president, said foreign intelligence services likely played a role in the coup attempt. Scott Ritter, the former UN weapons inspector, said he believes the British Intelligence Service played a leading role with the CIA assisting.

"What a lot of people don't know is that two days ago, prior to this, the Ukrainian intelligence service, they had a series of covert cells being put in Moscow that was uncovered by the FSB, Russian security, and round it up," Ritter told Judge Andrew Napolitano's "Judging Freedom." "It appears that these cells were supposed to be in place in Moscow, so that as Prigozhin started to move towards Moscow, they would carry out a series of attacks" that would terrorize the Russian people.

"This was a concerted effort between Wagner, Ukrainian intelligence, and their Western sponsors, in particular the British," Ritter said. He continued, "We know that the only way that Russia loses this conflict is if Moscow implodes."

Putin addressed the country and said, “Everything that weakens us must be put to the side, any differences that may be used or are used by our enemies to disrupt us from within. Thus, the actions splitting our unity are a betrayal of our people, of our brothers in combat who fight now at the front line.”

***TREND FORECAST:*** *While the Western media salivated over the chance that Putin faced a looming civil war, reports failed to mention that just a month earlier, Prigozhin urged Putin to use the full might of the country’s military in Ukraine to save Russia from the risk of a revolution and to bring the war to a quick end. (See “PUTIN FACES DOMESTIC PRESSURE TO CRUSH UKRAINE IN ALL-OUT WAR” 30 May 2023, “U.S. JOINT CHIEF OF STAFF WHO HAD CALLED FOR UKRAINE NEGOTIATIONS, NOW WANTS MORE WAR” 24 Jan 2023, “PUTIN ALLY MAKES CASE FOR TARGETED NUCLEAR STRIKES TO END UKRAINE WAR” 20 Jun 2023 and “PUTIN ACCUSES UKRAINE OF ‘TERRORIST ACTIVITY’ AFTER DRONE STRIKE ON MOSCOW, VOWS RETALIATION” 6 Jun 2023.)*

*“The most likely scenario for us in a special operation would not be a good one,” Prigozhin said before calling for total war with Ukraine instead of a “special military operation.”*

*“We must stop building new roads and infrastructure facilities and work only for the war, to live for a few years in the image of North Korea,” he said, according to The New York Times. “If we win, we can build anything. We stabilize the front and then move on to some kind of active action.”*

*While it is impossible to guess why Prigozhin agreed to end his march on Moscow, failed Western generals will give their opinions.*

*Retired U.S. Army Gen. David Petraeus said Prigozhin “lost his nerve.”*

*“Prigozhin kept his life but lost his Wagner Group, and he should be very careful around open windows in his new surroundings in Belarus, where he’s going,” he told CNN’s “State of the Union.”*

*"Clearly, Prigozhin lost his nerve. He was within roughly two hours' drive of the outskirts of Moscow, where they [the Russian military] were starting to prepare defensive positions. This rebellion, although it had some applause along the way, didn't appear to be generating the kind of support that he had hoped it would. And again, he decided to take the deal. He gave up this effort," he said.*

***TREND FORECAST:** Putin will up the ante in Ukraine after the uprising and have military leaders who want to prove their mettle. It's beyond the scope of reason to watch Prigozhin take such a risk without knowing that the support would be there. This operation either showed Prigozhin is compromised by the West, or it was staged by the Kremlin to justify a stronger war effort.*

## EU ANNOUNCES NEW SANCTIONS AGAINST RUSSIA THAT WILL ONLY HURT EUROPEANS

There's an old saying that goes, "Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results."

The European Union seems to be a good case in point.

The bloc announced last week that it plans on hitting Russia with its 11th round of sanctions over the Ukraine War—this time with a focus on a longer list of goods that cannot transit through Russia and new restrictions on the sale of items with dual-use potential to countries that could turn around and sell to Moscow.

The West still wants to choke Russia's war effort by starving the country of components it needs to produce new weapons. But Moscow has benefited from open trade with China, Iran, and India.

Ursula von der Leyen, president of the European Commission, told reporters that the new round of sanctions will "deal a further blow to [Russian President Vladimir] Putin's war machine with tightened export regulations, targeting entities supporting the Kremlin."

*The Moscow Times* reported that there have been over 13,000 international sanctions imposed on Russia, its companies, and its citizens. The paper noted that the number is more than what has been imposed on Iran, Cuba, and North Korea combined.

Despite the unprecedented effort, Russia's GDP only fell by 2.1 percent in 2022, according to the International Monetary Fund. The paper said Moscow is expecting a 2 percent growth in 2023. To put that number into perspective, the IMF anticipates a 0.7 percent GDP increase for France and a 0.1 decline for Germany.

In March 2023, Russia's inflation came in at 3.5 percent. The report said Germany's inflation hit 7.2 percent, the U.K. 10.1 percent, the U.S. 4.9 percent, and France 5.7 percent.

***TRENDPOST:*** *Russian President Vladimir Putin said earlier this month that Russia managed to withstand strict Western sanctions by turning away from the West, focusing on Asia and Africa while embracing one of our Top Trends: Self-Sufficiency. (See "TOP TREND 'SELF-SUFFICIENCY"\': PUTIN SAYS WESTERN SANCTIONS FAILED. TAKES SHOT AT ZELENSKY" 20 Jun 2023, "MORE SANCTIONS ON RUSSIA, MORE GERMAN GAS SHORTAGES" 25 Apr 2023 and "PUTIN CEMENTS OUR TOP TREND OF SELF-SUFFICIENCY: WESTERN SANCTIONS FAILED" 17 Jan 2023.)*

*Putin's comments came after more than 1,000 Western companies left the country and applied crushing sanctions on Russia's energy exports. Russia managed to find new buyers. The Moscow Times, citing the independent media outlet Agentstvo, reported that oil and gas exports from Russia in 2022 hit $383.7 billion, 43 percent more than the year before. The amount was more than the country spent the whole year.*

*Putin told a business conference in St. Petersburg last year that the West's effort to smash the Russian economy failed, and backfired. He said European countries suffered from these sanctions.*

*"The economic blitzkrieg never had any chances of success," he said. "The weaponry of sanctions is a double-edged sword . . . European countries dealt a serious blow to their own economy all on their own."*

*The new round of sanctions also impacts an additional 87 new entities "directly supporting Russia's military and industrial complex in its war of aggression against Ukraine."*

*These companies will face tighter export restrictions for dual-use and advanced technology items. In addition to the Russian and Iranian entities already listed, this now also covers entities registered in China, Uzbekistan, the United Arab Emirates, Syria, and Armenia.*

*"Our anti-circumvention tool will prevent Russia from getting its hands on sanctioned goods," von der Leyen said.*

## LAVROV SAYS HE'S NOT WORRIED ABOUT NATO OFFICIALLY JOINING THE CONFLICT

Sergey Lavrov, the Russian foreign minister, said last week that he is not worried about the prospect of NATO officially joining the war effort and fighting for Ukraine after the near constant saber-rattling from Brussels.

Lavrov spoke about NATO's opposition to peace plans that call for freezing the conflict because it would mean Russian troops stay in place and Moscow gets the chance to

rearm for another offensive. (See "CHINA RESPONDS TO CRITICISM FROM U.S., WEST OVER UKRAINE PEACE PROPOSAL," 28 Mar 2023).

Jens Stoltenberg, NATO secretary-general, said earlier this month that everyone wants the war to end, but "for peace to be sustainable, it must be just. Peace cannot mean freezing the conflict and accepting a deal dictated by Russia."

The West has said Ukraine should determine its own future. Kyiv's position is that Russia must exit the country, face war-crime charges, and pay for the rebuilding effort.

Lavrov has rejected the Ukraine deal as a non-starter and has blamed the Alliance for promoting the war through weapon shipments.

"If NATO, through the mouth of Stoltenberg, once again declares that they are against freezing, as they say, the conflict in Ukraine, then they want to fight," Lavrov said. "Well, let them fight. We are ready for this. We have long understood the goals of NATO in the situation around Ukraine, which have been formed for many years."

***TRENDPOST: The Trends Journal*** *has long said most Americans know nothing about the history and how the U.S. and the West have spent years preparing Kyiv for this war. (See "RUSSIA SAYS NO UKRAINE WAR IF KYIV ABIDED MINSK AGREEMENT" 17 Jan 2023 and "VICTORIA 'FUCK THE EU' NULAND WHO SPEARHEADED OVERTHROW OF DEMOCRATICALLY ELECTED PRESIDENT OF UKRAINE IN 2014, STILL IN POWER" 22 Feb 2022.)*

*In the weeks leading up to the February 2022 invasion, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken, who made a fortune working with defense contractors when he's not in politics, failed to recognize Russia's legitimate security concerns about NATO expansion in Ukraine.*

*Russia saw Ukraine as the ultimate red line and considered the West's military relationship with Ukraine as an existential threat and was willing to go to war.*

*"We saw how the military infrastructure was unfolding, how hundreds of foreign advisers had begun to work there, with the most modern weapons being regularly delivered from NATO countries," Putin said during his Victory Day speech in 2022. "The danger was growing every day. Russia offered a pre-emptive rebuff to the aggression—this was a forced, timely move and the only correct decision, one taken by a strong and independent country."*

*Putin acknowledged for the first time in a video address last year that he inquired about NATO membership with then-President Bill Clinton during his U.S. counterpart's visit to Moscow. Putin said he asked how a Russian membership would go over in the U.S.*

*"I would not give you all the details of that conversation," Putin said. "But the reaction to my conversation—look, well, let me put it this way. How did Americans really look at this possibility? You can see it in their practical stance. Open support of the terrorists in North Caucasus, ignoring our demands and concerns, withdrawing from the arms limitation treaties, and so on."*

**Lavrov Warns Against F-16s**

Lavrov said Moscow has expressed concerns that the West will provide Ukraine with F-16s that are capable of carrying nuclear warheads, and said its forces will have to respond accordingly.

His comments to RT TV came before the *Financial Times* published an article that cited Frank St John, Lockheed Martin's chief operating officer, who said, "We are standing by, ready to not only backfill need as it arises with new F-16 builds but also any modifications to F-16s as well as training, equipment, and systems."

Lavrov said the F-16 would be a significant escalation because the jet can be modified to carry nukes.

"We have stated this publicly. We voiced our strongest concern at the meeting of experts of the Nuclear Five nations at the UN Security Council," he said. "The Americans tried to downplay the issue saying, do you really think we will give Ukraine

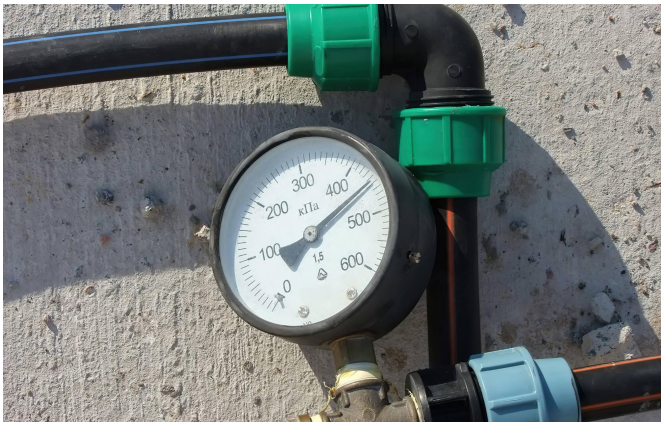
jets carrying nuclear weapons? We said that we are not even thinking. Our systems monitoring those jets will not be able to tell a plane carrying nuclear weapons from the one that is not carrying them. To answer your question about our response, it will be made by the military. They know what is to be done."

F-16 jets can be made to carry the B61 nuclear bomb.

The U.S. Air Force budget request for Fiscal Year 2015 shows that integration of the B61-12 on NATO F-16 and Tornado aircraft, the Federation of American Scientists reported.

***TREND FORECAST:*** *The addition of the F-16 in the Ukrainian arsenal will not change anything because these fourth-generation jets will not stand a chance against Russian fighters and missile batteries. Much like HIMARS and Leopard 2 tanks that were supposed to be a game changer, these jets will just be another provocation.*

## FUCK PEACE! U.S. MOBILIZES TO TARGET COUNTRIES WHO REFUSE TO FIGHT AGAINST RUSSIA




As we have long noted, those who speak out for peace and hold and attend peace rallies, such as Gerald Celente, are blackballed and ridiculed by the "libtard" people and the press.

But Jake Sullivan, the warmonger White House's national security adviser, is celebrated by the Presstitutes and his words of war are blasted across the media spectrum. In his visit to Denmark last weekend, the little clown boy Sullivan pressured countries that have not condemned Russia's invasion of Ukraine to fall into line and let Washington do the thinking for them.

The *Financial Times,* which first reported on the meeting, said it took place in Copenhagen at the request of Kyiv. The paper, citing people familiar with the issue,

said representatives from India, Brazil, and South Africa attended. The meeting also included representatives from the EU.

**No Peace**

Russia has said it will not agree to a peaceful resolution if it means it must hand over land it now controls. Ukraine said ceding land to Russia would be an unacceptable outcome. Russian President Vladimir Putin has said Russia is open to "constructive dialogue" with anyone who "wants to establish peace on the principles of fairness and acknowledgment of the legitimate interests of the parties."

***TRENDPOST:*** *It is worth noting that Victoria Nuland, the neocon Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs at the State Department, joined Sullivan in Copenhagen, so any report that "peace" was a top agenda item seems hard to believe. (See "WWIII: VICTORIA 'F-CK THE EU' NULAND ADMITS THAT THE U.S. HAS BEEN HELPING UKRAINE PLAN FOR COUNTEROFFENSIVE" 30 May 2023, "U.S. UNDER SEC. VICTORIA 'FUCK THE EU' NULAND CALLS CRIMEA A LEGITIMATE TARGET FOR UKRAINE, ANGERS KREMLIN" 21 Feb 2023 and "VICTORIA 'FUCK THE EU' NULAND WHO SPEARHEADED OVERTHROW OF DEMOCRATICALLY ELECTED PRESIDENT OF UKRAINE IN 2014, STILL IN POWER" 22 Feb 2022.)*

*The U.S. learned during the Ukraine War that—despite its full control over Western European countries—the Global South, Africa, and Asia are non-conforming and make decisions on their own self-interest.*

*While the summit in Denmark mentioned a "peace summit," there was no accompanying announcement that Ukraine is willing to bend on its demands and—given that Russia has, thus far, turned back Kyiv's counteroffensive, there is no evidence that Moscow would bend on their demands.*

## MORE REASONS TO QUIT USING ANY ARTIFICIAL SWEETENERS

*Even the WHO, an organization that has been criticized heavily for its other policies, now agrees about the dangers of artificial sweeteners.*

*by Dr. Joseph Mercola*

STORY AT-A-GLANCE

- The World Health Organization (WHO) warned people not to consume aspartame (Equal), sucralose (Splenda) or other artificial sweeteners for weight control
- According to WHO, artificial sweeteners don't offer any long-term benefit in reducing body fat in adults or children

- A WHO systematic review also revealed “potential undesirable effects from long-term use” of artificial sweeteners, including “increased risk of type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, and mortality in adults”
- Newborns from mothers who consumed a lot of sucralose during pregnancy experienced a number of negative metabolic and inflammatory effects
- Other research linked aspartame consumption to anxiety and found the mental health changes were passed on to future generations

Thousands of popular foods and drinks are made artificially sweet with chemical sweeteners. Long claimed to be a healthy choice because they contain no calories or sugar, evidence continues to emerge that consuming artificial sweeteners is a good way to wreck your health.

It doesn’t matter if you choose aspartame (Equal), sucralose (Splenda) or another artificial sweetener. Consuming these products is putting your health at risk, so much so that even the World Health Organization warned people not to consume them.

**WHO Warns Against Non-Sugar Sweeteners for Weight Loss**

Diet foods and drinks are among the most common products that contain artificial sweeteners. Marketed as tools for weight loss, this deceptive practice lures people into thinking they’re a smart way to shed extra pounds.

Yet, a systematic review and meta-analysis conducted by the World Health Organization revealed "there is no clear consensus on whether non-sugar sweeteners are effective for long-term weight loss or maintenance, or if they are linked to other long-term health effects at intakes within the ADI."[1]

In May 2023, WHO released a new guideline, advising not to use non-sugar sweeteners (NSS) for weight control because they don’t offer any long-term benefit in reducing body fat in adults or children.[2]

What’s more, the systematic review suggests "potential undesirable effects from long-term use of NSS, such as an increased risk of type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular

diseases, and mortality in adults." In a news release, Francesco Branca, WHO director for nutrition and food safety, said:

> "Replacing free sugars with NSS does not help with weight control in the long term. People need to consider other ways to reduce free sugars intake, such as consuming food with naturally occurring sugars, like fruit, or unsweetened food and beverages. NSS are not essential dietary factors and have no nutritional value. People should reduce the sweetness of the diet altogether, starting early in life, to improve their health."

The WHO guidance to avoid artificial sweeteners applies to all categories of the chemicals, including acesulfame K, aspartame, advantame, cyclamates, neotame, saccharin and sucralose. The systematic review and meta-analysis included 283 studies, which revealed artificial sweeteners are linked to an increased risk of:[3]

- Obesity
- Type 2 diabetes
- High fasting glucose
- All-cause mortality
- Cardiovascular events
- Death from cardiovascular disease
- Stroke
- High blood pressure
- Bladder cancer
- Preterm birth and possible adiposity in offspring later in life

According to the WHO study:

> “Mechanisms by which NSS as a class of molecules might exert effects that increase risk for obesity and certain NCDs [non-communicable diseases] have been reviewed extensively and include interaction with extra-oral taste receptors, possibly with alteration of the gut microbiome.
>
> “Because sugars and all known NSS presumably elicit sweet taste through the TAS1R heterodimeric sweet-taste receptor, which has been identified not just in

> the oral cavity but in other glucose-sensing tissues, it is not surprising that such a group of vastly different chemical entities could be responsible for similar effects on health."

**Reasons To Be Wary of Sucralose**

In the U.S., sucralose is the most commonly used artificial sweetener. It's found in more than 6,000 food products, including many diet beverages. When the U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved sucralose in 1998, none of the studies it reviewed involved humans.[4]

One of sucralose's key marketing claims has long been that it neither metabolizes nor bioaccumulates in the human body, thus making it a basically inert substance. In 2018, however, an animal study found sucralose was metabolized in the gastrointestinal tract and accumulated in fat tissue.

This was "not part of the original regulatory decision process for this agent and indicate that it now may be time to revisit the safety and regulatory status of this organochlorine artificial sweetener," the researchers wrote at the time.[5]

Based on these findings, consumer group U.S. Right to Know (USRTK) asked the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) to investigate whether sucralose's marketing claims are deceptive. According to USRTK:[6]

> "Sucralose is 600 times sweeter than sugar and itself contains no calories. Although it has been marketed as a healthy product that can help fend off obesity and diabetes, sucralose consumption has been linked to leukemia, weight gain, obesity, diabetes, liver inflammation, metabolic dysfunction and other illnesses."

In 2022, a study published in Microorganisms also revealed that consuming sucralose—in "amounts, far lower than the suggested ADI"[7]
—for just 10 weeks was enough to induce gut dysbiosis and altered glucose and insulin levels in healthy, young adults.

The bacteria most affected by sucralose appeared to belong primarily to the phylum Firmicutes, which are centrally involved in glucose and insulin metabolism. However, it doesn't end there. Animal studies suggest the sucralose-altered gut microbiome could be involved in inflammation of the gut and liver, as well as cancer.

Additionally, a new study published May 29, 2023, in the *Journal of Toxicology and Environmental Health* found that a chemical broken down in the body when you consume sucralose is genotoxic and breaks up your DNA.[8]

The fat soluble compound, sucralose-6-acetate, is produced in your gut during digestion at a threshold exceeding the European Food Safety Authority's maximum allowance for a single sucralose-sweetened drink in one day.

In their abstract,[9] study authors noted the DNA-damaging implications of such toxicity:

> "Sucralose-6-acetate significantly increased the expression of genes associated with inflammation, oxidative stress and cancer …Overall, the toxicological and pharmacokinetic findings for sucralose-6-acetate raise significant health concerns regarding the safety and regulatory status of sucralose itself."

**A Warning About Sucralose Intake During Pregnancy**

A 2023 study published in *Biomedicines* also raised red flags about consuming sucralose during pregnancy.[10]

Animal studies have previously found that sucralose intake during pregnancy may increase the risk of weight gain, metabolic disturbances and low-grade systemic inflammation in offspring. The research team found similar effects in humans.

The study evaluated newborns from women who had heavy sucralose intake—defined as more than 36 milligrams (mg) of sucralose a day during pregnancy—or light sucralose ingestion, defined as less than 60 mg a week. Newborns from mothers with heavy sucralose intake experienced a number of negative metabolic and inflammatory effects compared to newborns of light intake women, including:

- Significant increases in birth weight and insulin
- Substantial increase in the percentage of inflammatory nonclassical monocytes
- Higher IL-1 beta and TNF-alpha with lower IL-10 expression

From 2000 to 2010, the consumption of artificial sweeteners increased 54 percent in adults and 200 percent in children. The researchers called for urgent investigation into the effects of artificial sweetener intake during pregnancy, which could significantly increase chronic disease burden in adulthood:

> "Together with numerous studies in animal models, present results expand on the notion that sucralose and other NNS [non-nutritive sweeteners] may act as obesogenic factors during fetal development, influencing the onset of obesity and metabolic disease in childhood.
>
> "We encourage other research teams to conduct prospective cohort studies to follow up on newborns intrauterinally exposed to sucralose across the years to draw significant conclusions regarding the possible role of NNS in programming obesity and metabolic disease later in life.
>
> "The urgent need for additional investigation in this field is justified when considering that up to 50% of obese children become obese in adulthood with a 4-fold increased risk of developing chronic non-communicable diseases such as T2D."

**Is Aspartame Making You Anxious?**

Artificial sweeteners' detrimental effects aren't limited to the physical realm. Mental health effects have also been reported, including for aspartame. Approved by the FDA in 1981, aspartame can be found in close to 5,000 food and beverage products. Worldwide, 3,000 to 5,000 metric tons of aspartame are produced annually, and, like sucralose, it's widely consumed by adults, including pregnant women, and children.[11]

When you consume aspartame, it's broken down into aspartic acid, phenylalanine—a precursor of monoamine neurotransmitters—and methanol, which may have "potent"

effects on your central nervous system, Florida State University (FSU) College of Medicine researchers noted.

Their study, published in PNAS, linked aspartame consumption to anxiety and found the mental health changes were passed on to future generations. The FDA's recommended maximum daily intake value for aspartame is 50 milligrams per kilogram.

The FSU study involved mice drinking water that contained aspartame at a dosage of approximately 15 percent of the FDA's maximum daily intake for humans. The dose was equivalent to a human drinking six to eight 8-ounce cans of diet soda daily.[12]

The mice consumed the aspartame-laced water for 12 weeks, which led to "robust, dose-dependent anxiety."[13]

"It was such a robust anxiety-like trait that I don't think any of us were anticipating we would see," study author Sara Jones said. "It was completely unexpected. Usually you see subtle changes."[14]

The study came about after the research team looked at the transgenerational effects of nicotine, revealing epigenetic changes in sperm cells. Similar effects may be occurring from artificial sweeteners. Study co-author Pradeep Bhide, the Jim and Betty Ann Rodgers Eminent Scholar Chair of Developmental Neuroscience in the Department of Biomedical Sciences, explained:[15]

> "What this study is showing is we need to look back at the environmental factors, because what we see today is not only what's happening today, but what happened two generations ago and maybe even longer."

Mice exposed to aspartame had changes in the expression of genes that regulate excitation-inhibition balance in the amygdala, a region of the brain involved in regulating anxiety and fear. The changes were also seen in up to two generations from the aspartame-exposed mice.[16]

## Aspartame Linked to Cancer, Weight Gain

There's no reason to consume aspartame if you value your health. Like sucralose, it's linked to a number of serious health problems, including:[17]

- Cancer
- Cardiovascular disease
- Alzheimer's disease
- Seizures
- Stroke and dementia
- Intestinal dysbiosis
- Mood disorders
- Headaches
- Migraines

Adding insult to injury, since many people consume aspartame thinking it will help them "diet," it's also linked to weight gain, increased appetite and obesity-related diseases.

In a 2017 systematic review and meta-analysis[18] published in the *Canadian Medical Association Journal*, consuming artificial sweeteners was associated with increases in weight and waist circumference along with increased incidence of obesity, high blood pressure, metabolic syndrome, Type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular events.

Regarding cancer, a 2022 population-based cohort study published in *PLOS Medicine*, which involved 102,865 adults, revealed artificial sweeteners—especially aspartame and acesulfame-K—were associated with increased cancer risk, including breast cancer and obesity-related cancers.[19]

## Are You Ready to Ditch Artificial Sweeteners?

It's clear that artificial sweeteners have no place in a healthy diet. Fortunately, as you work to eliminate ultra processed foods from your meals, you'll naturally consume less artificial sweeteners, which are primarily found in products like diet drinks, desserts, candies, snacks and flavored yogurts. Be aware, however, that they're also hidden in

condiments, salad dressing and medications, so you'll need to read labels to ensure you avoid them.

If cravings are stopping you from giving up these toxic sweeteners, this video shows how to use the Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT), a psychological acupressure tool, when you feel a craving coming on. It can help you overcome the urge to consume a poisonous artificial sweetener.
Other natural craving-busters include sour foods like fermented vegetables or water with lemon juice. When you feel the urge to eat something artificially sweet, grab a glass of water or tea with citrus juice added for a much healthier treat.

**Sources and References**


1 WHO April 12, 2022
2 WHO May 15, 2023
3 WHO April 12, 2022, Executive Summary
4 U.S. Right to Know May 30, 2023
5 Journal of Toxicology and Environmental Health, Part A. August 21, 2018
6 U.S. Right to Know May 30, 2023
7 Microorganisms 2022, 10(2)
8 News Medical Life Sciences May 31, 2023
9 Journal of Toxicology and Environmental Health, Part B. May 29, 2023
10 Biomedicines 2023, 11(3), 650; doi: 10.3390/biomedicines11030650
11 PNAS December 2, 2022, 119 (49) e2213120119
12 Florida State University News December 8, 2022
13 PNAS December 2, 2022, 119 (49) e2213120119, Intro
14 Florida State University News December 8, 2022
15 Florida State University News December 8, 2022
16 PNAS December 2, 2022, 119 (49) e2213120119
17 U.S. Right to Know May 15, 2023
18 CMAJ July 17, 2017 189 (28) E929-E939; doi: 10.1503/cmaj.161390, Results
19 PLOS Medicine March 24, 2022



*The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author[s] and do not necessarily reflect the views of **The Trends Journal**.*

# PUTIN SHOOTS HIMSELF IN THE HEAD

*by Paul Craig Roberts*

Putin's latest speech is one that should never have been made. With his ill-considered speech, Putin has lent his weight to U.S. neoconservative propaganda that he is in a weakened and challenged position and that the U.S. can win in Ukraine. With the Ukrainian forces essentially defeated, the fake news "mutiny" is precisely what the neoconservatives needed to keep the conflict alive, which is why Scott Ritter thinks Victoria Nuland might have instigated the "coup."

Even if what Putin said was true–and it is not–he should never have said it.
He has verified the U.S. neoconservatives' propaganda. The consequence will be more provocations of Russia. The danger from these provocations make it ever more important that Russia use sufficient force to end the conflict before the neoconservatives spin it out of control.

Clearly, Putin has third-rate advisors. Instead of verifying neoconservative propaganda about Putin weakened by internal dissent, Putin should have said that Prigozhin's protest got his attention to the bad relationship between the boots-on-the-ground and the military brass in Moscow and to the desire of the troops doing the fighting for the Kremlin to use sufficient force to end the conflict. The Wagner troops are tired of dying for a war that doesn't go anywhere or have an end in prospect.

But this would imply Putin's mistake, not Prigozhin's, and thinking they were shielding Putin his advisers actually put him at risk by verifying the neoconservatives' portrait of Putin as weak and internally opposed.

The Russian military brass have been trying to get rid of Prigozhin, because he refused to put his Wagner Group under their command. The military brass have been paying him back with ammunition shortages and in other ways. It is possible that they did hit one of his camps with a missile in order to light his fuse. Whatever happened, the military brass succeeded in getting rid of him, just as the Democrats and the CIA got rid of President Trump's National Security Advisor, General Flynn.

Possibly, Prigozhin succeeded in getting Putin's attention, but that Putin found the "armed rebellion," "mutiny" story too set in stone to escape it. If Putin actually regards the events of last Saturday as high treason, why did he give a pass to Prigozhin and the Wagner soldiers?

Would a leader threatened by Wagner troops incorporate them into the military or would he disband and prosecute them?

I have already explained why it was not a coup.

Yevgeny Prigozhin is a long-time close ally of Putin. He formed the Wagner Group at Putin's request. The Group, as formed, is separate from the Russian Military but was equipped by the Ministry of Defense and used Russian military bases for training. There is speculation that Putin wanted the Group so that he can conduct military operations with plausible deniability. This makes little sense as the Wagner Group is a Russian paid military force that operates for Russia. There is no possibility of denying that.

I don't know why Putin had Prigozhin form the Wagner Group. I think of the Wagner Group like the French Foreign Legion and as a substitute for a draft.

We will find out if Prigozhin succeeded in getting Putin's attention if there are changes in the upper ranks of the military and if, finally, Putin authorizes the force to bring the conflict to a conclusion. If Putin does not bring the conflict to a close, nuclear war will be the likely consequence.

Col. Douglas Macgregor sees the situation as I do except I am unsure he appreciates the damage Putin has done to himself in the West by proclaiming that Russia was on the verge of civil war and a major internal armed conflict, and in Russia by his denunciation of the Wagner commander and his troops as traitors who wanted Russians to kill one another.

The video linked here is valuable not only for Col. Macgregor's explanations, but also for video clips showing the enthusiasm and high regard shown by the Russian population of Rostov to Prigozhin and his soldiers on their arrival in the city last Saturday. Russians are proud of the Wagner troops and to hear them denounced by Putin has probably damaged Putin more than it has damaged Prigozhin.

This video also has clips of Secretary of State Blinken claiming that Putin is being rejected by his own people and clips of a Biden Navy admiral promising ever more weapons for Ukraine. Clearly, Washington's response to the false news "coup" is as I described. So sad Putin was so naive as to jump into the trap.

It is not only Prigozhin and his soldiers who want the war brought to a quick end. It is what the Russian people want. Victory is important to them as a statement of their sovereignty and prowess. There is no excuse for Putin's go-no-where-war that makes Russia look ineffectual. All Putin has achieved is a great widening of the conflict with NATO and U.S. involvement. Russians are dying for no progress. The deaths are pointless.

Remember, the Russian winter offensive did not happen. The excuse was it never got cold enough to freeze the ground so tanks, artillery, and troop convoys wouldn't get

stuck in the mud. Now it is almost July and still no summer offensive. If Putin continues to sit out his war, the U.S. and NATO will have time to create another Ukrainian army, maybe with Polish troops, perhaps with one of the CIA's jihad armies.

Putin is also harming combat effectiveness by giving in to the military brass and breaking up the Wagner Group into sections and integrating them into Russian Army groups. The Russian soldiers will be envious because they have not had the Wagner troops' successes. The Wagner troops are older and hardened men and will not tolerate snide remarks. It might not work well, and the fighting prowess of the Wagner troops might suffer from the loss of cohesion. In effect, the Wagner Group is an army-sized special forces unit. Its demise would be a large victory for the West.

It is very easy to understand the Wagner Group's frustrations that erupted in a protest. It is the duty of a commander in chief to bring a war to a quick and victorious conclusion. Putin has failed his responsibility.

I attribute the fake news "armed rebellion" to Putin's failures. He failed to address the smoldering dispute between Prigozhin and the generals, and he presented the soldiers and the country with an endless war that demoralized the Russian people. If Russia cannot defeat pitiful Ukraine, how can Russia stand up to the West?

The fact that the Russian media and the Western media agree on a fake news narrative, now set in stone, further removes the conflict from a truthful understanding, thus maximizing the chances for an explosion that adversely affects the entire world.

*The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author[s] and do not necessarily reflect the views of* ***The Trends Journal****.*

# PRESIDENTIAL REALITY SHOW® 2024

## PRESIDENTIAL REALITY SHOW: WSJ ATTEMPTS TO PAINT RFK JR AS CONSPIRACY THEORIST, DOING MURDOCH'S BIDDING

The concerted effort by the corporate media complex in the U.S. continued its attempt to write Robert F. Kennedy Jr. off as a loon last week with a *Wall Street Journal* article that—as expected—tries to paint him as a conspiracy theorist.

The paper brings us to a campaign stop in Nashua, N.H., where the environmental lawyer raised concerns about contaminated water and floated the theory that it could be contributing to many young people wanting to change their gender. He cited a "small" study that found frogs exposed to certain herbicides could see their genders changed.

“If we're chemically damaging sexual development in our children, if it injures frogs that way, my idea would be it should be prohibited unless they show it doesn't hurt people,” he said.

Kennedy, as an environmental lawyer, no doubt knows far more about possible harms from herbicides than the *WSJ* reporter, but she used his comment to set the stage for her attempted takedown of Kennedy’s campaign that she called “a mix of the nostalgic and the weird” and wedged somewhere between “outside the American mainstream and firmly in conspiracy-theory land.”

***TREND FORECAST:*** *The Wall Street Journal offers no evidence that Kennedy’s theories are wrong, but just by using words like “weird” and “conspiracy theory land” signals to readers that he is not only a danger to the U.S., but a danger to himself. The writer thinks she can dismiss Kennedy just by listing his arguments as “debunked” by “public-health experts.”*

*“He has cast doubt on the safety of Covid-19 vaccines. He has questioned whether prescription drugs have caused a rise in school shootings and whether Wi-Fi exposure leads to cancer. He has said that the Central Intelligence Agency assassinated his uncle and could have killed his father, Robert F. Kennedy, despite no concrete evidence. And he has said the U.S. is perpetuating the Ukraine war to fuel the defense industry,” the article read.*

*The writer takes the position that these topics have no place in the public discourse because Rupert Murdoch believes these issues are settled. Any question means you’ve entered “conspiracy-theory land.”*

*Eliza Collins, the “reporter,” wrote that Kennedy’s comments will likely not “endear him to enough Democratic voters to replace Joe Biden.” (See “MEDIA TRIES TO PRESENT CHRISTIE AS TOP COMPETITION FOR TRUMP, STILL IGNORES RFK JR.” 13 Jun 2023, “IT’S ALL ABOUT DESANTIS, FU RFK JR.” 6 Jun 2023, “RFK JR. BLASTS U.S. DECISION TO BACK F-16s FOR UKRAINE AS ‘DANGEROUS ESCALATION’” 30 May 2023 and “RON DESANTIS’S CAMPAIGN ANNOUNCEMENT GETS MAJOR MEDIA COVERAGE, RFK JR STILL IGNORED” 30 May 2023.)*

*Gerald Celente, the first to call Kennedy as the best selection to run for President back in November of 2022, five months before RFK Jr, announced his run for the White House, has forecast that Kennedy will be the next president of the U.S., without some unseen wild card event. Among them, President Joe Biden's refusal to debate him and/or Biden taking America to war, since as Celente says, "When all else fails, they take you to war."*

*The media has ignored Kennedy because it hates individuals who think for themselves because it is all about control.*

*Kennedy told New Hampshire that he sees himself as a liberal in the traditional sense.*

*"Why are liberals now in support of war? Why are they suddenly in support of censorship? Why are you suddenly putting faith, ultimate faith, in pharmaceutical companies, who have always been great villains in the liberal zeitgeist? Why are liberals now aligned against medical freedom, and bodily autonomy?"*

**ABORTION BECOMING ISSUE REPUBLICANS WANT TO GO AWAY**

Red states that celebrated the Supreme Court's overturning of Roe v. Wade are now dealing with the political realities of what no abortion access has on voters.

*The Wall Street Journal* reported on how Republican strongholds are facing a backlash as "the early post-Roe error has revealed broad support for at least some measure of abortion rights, including in some of the nation's reddest states."

The paper noted how Republican congressional candidates suffered in the last midterm elections—and just barely took control of the House despite being heavy

favorites. The Supreme Court ruling seemed to energize Democratic voters—and even women who identify themselves as Republicans.

More Americans support a woman's right to choose than ever before, with 69 percent saying they agree that abortion "should generally be legal in the first three months of pregnancy," according to a Gallup poll released in June. (See "ABORTION SUPPORT HITS RECORD HIGH IN THE U.S.," 20 Jun 2023).

The survey said the previous high was in May (67 percent)—shortly after the leak of Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization. The survey found that most Americans oppose the procedure in late pregnancy, but 37 percent say it should be legal in the second three months of pregnancy and 22 percent in the last three months, which is also the highest ever polled by Gallup.

Rep. Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., called on Democrats to focus on abortion in 2024 and said Republicans will get crushed on the issue.

"Everybody said we're going to lose 30, 40 seats," Pelosi told MSNBC on Sunday, referring to the 2022 midterms. "Last time we lost five and everybody says you had the wrong message. They were saying to me, you're going to owe an apology to the members because Dobbs is in the rearview mirror. But it wasn't. It was up front, and it is right up in front of women in our country."

***TRENDPOST: The Trends Journal*** *has reported extensively on the implications of the court's ruling on the Dobbs's case that overturned Roe v. Wade, which ended federal protections for abortion. (See "CONFIDENCE IN SUPREME COURT HITS ALL-TIME LOW IN 2022: POLL" 23 May 2023 and "YOUNG AMERICANS MAY PLAY BIGGER ROLE IN NEXT PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS BECAUSE THEY'RE FED UP" 13 Jun 2023.)*

*Indeed, since the Dobbs's ruling, the Democrat Party has increased its support among women voters, who cite abortion rights as their key issue. NPR wrote, "Republicans have struggled to find the right post-Roe balance after 50 years of lobbying for the landmark ruling to be overturned. They got their wish but have suffered politically since."*

*Gerald Celente has said whether it is Donald Trump or Gov. Ron DeSantis that runs against the Democrat nominee next year, their stance on the abortion issue will be a major issue that will cause them to lose the race to the White House.*

*NBC News noted that the Public Policy Research Institute ran a national poll in February that found 64 percent of Americans think abortion should be legal in all or most cases—which is an increase from the 55 percent who agreed in 2010. The poll, when broken down by political affiliation, found 87 percent of Democrats, 65 percent of independents, and 37 percent of Republicans saying abortion should be legal.*

*Major abortion bans failed to pass legislatures in South Carolina and Nebraska.*

*State Sen. Penry Gustafson, R-S.C., identified herself as pro-life, but voted against a near-total ban in the state in April because she said there was "no room for empathy, reality or graciousness" in the bill, the Associated Press said.*

*by Joe Doran*

## IS AMAZON LOOKING TO CANCEL HUMAN AUTHORS?

Is Amazon looking to dominate the bookselling space even more than it does already, by deploying AI to generate fiction and nonfiction content?

A recent blog post of “Lost Books” on Medium.com speculated on that possibility, based on unverified sources who claim the company has made alarming strides on AI that can generate “human level” writing in multiple genres, even including long forms like novels.

According to the article, it’s all about profit:

> *"Experts speculate that by controlling the "full stack" of content creation and distribution, and then subsequent licensing of content and technology it wholly owns, Amazon stands to gain unprecedented control over a publishing industry it basically already controls anyway."*
>
> *("Amazon Replaces Human Authors with AI - Lost Books - Medium," 19 June 2023)*

As far as technology Amazon is said to be possibly utilizing to realize sophisticated AI generated content, some have pointed to a "Storyteller" project that the company officially suspended years ago.

First announced in 2013, Storyteller at the time was billed as beta software that could turn tv and movie scripts into storyboards.

Amazon's own webpage on the software is still active. It describes the software platform's abilities:

> *"Storyteller begins by scanning a movie script that has been uploaded to Amazon Studios. It identifies the scenes, locations and characters from scene descriptions, and "casts" them from a library of thousands of characters, props and backgrounds. Filmmakers can recast or change locations, or they can upload their own images. Storyteller places the cast in front of the right background so that filmmakers can focus their time on the emotion and energy of scenes by using pan and zoom, changing the facial expressions and positions of characters, adding vehicles or props or adding captions with descriptions or additional dialogue."*

Storyteller is not currently active or available. But rumors are flying that the Storyteller team has been working on an expanded vision of content creation, made possible by startling advances in AI.

In the meantime, Amazon Studios has become a large presence in the entertainment industry, thanks in part to moves like acquiring MGM Studios in 2021. (See "AMAZON BUYS MGM FOR $8.45 BILLION," 1 Jun 2021.)

The Medium article reported that the Storyteller team may be attempting to develop AI that can create completely immersive XR worlds from AI-generated books, that might work with Apple's wearable headset, the Apple Vision Pro, which is scheduled to launch in early 2024 at a pricey $3,499.

The headset reportedly will provide an unprecedented mixed reality experience, via two micro-OLED displays with 23 million pixels—nearly three times as many as in a 4K display.

It's a fact that Amazon has ambitions to build its own VR technology in-house, as Ar Technica reported in 2022. ("Amazon is hiring to build an 'advanced' and 'magical' AR/VR product," 19 Apr 2022.)

Interestingly, that article suggested Amazon, while focused on immersive VR tech, might not be focused on headset wearable, but instead on something like whole-room projection:

> *"But Amazon's product might not be the same kind of product that we know Meta and Apple have focused on; it might not be a wearable at all. Some of Amazon's job listings refer to it as a "smart home" device. And Amazon is among the tech companies that have experimented with room-scale projection and holograms instead of wearables for AR."*

Sci-fi junkies who know their classics may recognize shades of Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* in that description. In Bradbury's dystopian novel, people were kept preoccupied by immersive experiences in their living rooms, while authorities regularly raided anyone found in possession of written books.

Fahrenheit 451 is the temperature at which books burn.

If Amazon is indeed pursuing grand ambitions to expand its dominance in the bookselling sector and entertainment via AI, they may not be as far along as some have speculated.

The company just announced it was investing 100 million into generative AI, with the aim of competing with Microsoft / OpenAI's ChatGPT, and Google's Bard, according to CNBC. ("AWS is investing $100 million in generative A.I. center in race to keep up with Microsoft and Google," 22 Jun 2023.)

Amazon specified AWS (Amazon Web Services) as a platform they envisioned for upgrading with generative AI features.

In an interview with CNBC, AWS head Adam Selipsky downplayed the current advantage of tech rivals:

> *"You ask yourself the question — where are the different runners three steps into a 10K race? Does it really matter? The point is, you're three steps in, and it's a 10K race."*

The money will include adding more data scientists, engineers and solutions architects to the company's AI projects.

It's conceivable that Amazon might eventually offer generative AI assistance for Kindle authors as part of their Kindle book publishing platform.

But even if their ambitions are more modest than worst-case scenarios, it's a good bet that profit won't be their only motivation.

**Amazon Studio Already Mandates Woke Ideology For Content It Produces**

Entertaining and incisive reviewers like The Critical Drinker and Nerdrotic have managed to gain large audiences on YouTube, as well as other social media platforms, by pointing out the problems with putting current political fashions above good storytelling.

But many people still aren't aware of just how rigidly codified and enforced Amazon's dictates to writers have become.

Any writer who wants to submit a script to Amazon Studios has to abide by a very detailed set of ideological protocols.  It's a way of exerting thought control over content.

Quite simply, scripts which don't abide by the protocols don't get produced.

A sampling of Amazon's codes includes the following:

> ***Developing Stories and Characters:***
> *We encourage pitches, scripts, and stories from storytellers of all backgrounds, including those from underrepresented communities. Consistent with our Content Guidelines, Amazon Originals should reflect the wide diversity of our customers and recognize the dignity of all people by avoiding demeaning stereotypes and harmful tropes. For this reason, characterizations based on race, ethnicity, nationality, sexual orientation, religion, disability (including mental health), body size or image, age, gender, gender identity, and gender expression should be made with care, and in each case will be subject to an enhanced review.*
>
> ***Stereotyping***
> *We discourage stories that solely depict harmful or negative stereotypes, slurs, and dehumanizing language related to identity as well as narratives that link identity factors to jobs, religious beliefs, social class, or behavior.*
>
> ***Historical Depictions***
> *Content that features out-of-date historical stereotypes, language and iconography must avoid gratuitous use of such portrayals.*
>
> ***Cultural Authenticity***
> *When series regulars or lead characters portray people from underrepresented communities (women; underrepresented racial/ethnic groups; sexual orientation; gender identity; people with disabilities), we expect creative teams to make a concerted effort to hire above-the-line staff (directors, writers, producers and/or creators) who represent the identity groups depicted on screen. We will aim for*

*30% of the above-the-line staff to meet this goal in 2021. This aspirational goal will increase to 50% by 2024.*

*On the occasion when this is not possible, producers must indicate how they will identify and hire outside consultants/vendors, approved by Amazon, to provide culturally relevant expertise.*

***Delivery of Plans***
*Prior to principal photography, Amazon Studios and partners will work together to deliver their plans for how they plan to achieve the Inclusion Policy.*

***Report on Expectation Achievement***
*Amazon Studios will provide a report template for each company to indicate whether the expectations were met. This report must be submitted within one month of completion of principal photography and will include:*

*i. Gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and disability data on production-specific, above-the-line talent (Directors, Writers, Producers, Creators, credited actors) as well as below-the-line positions (department heads and seconds.)*

*ii. A full description of the film and episodic content that's been created (i.e., storyline), and percentage or number of characters identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, and/or transgender, including non-binary, and those with a disability.*

*iii. The number and list of diverse suppliers hired for the production (including women-owned and minority-owned businesses).*

And there's much more, as cataloged out by awardsdaily.com. ("Amazon Studios to Dictate Storytelling in its Inclusion Standards," 28 Jun 2021.)

All of Hollywood has recently instituted race and "gender" quotas, and other ideological criteria for scripts and productions, so Amazon is hardly the only company engaged in content creation thought-policing.

Many would argue that individual companies have a right to produce the kind of content they wish.

But should a whole industry have a right to enforce ideological codes of content, when such expression is otherwise legal and protected by First Amendment safeguards?

In the case of Amazon, the fact that it operates not only as an entertainment producer, but also as one of the world's largest platforms for other producers to sell creative content, already presents problems.

But the prospect of Amazon becoming an AI book content creator that publishes its works on its own leading bookselling platform would exponentially worsen the situation.

**The Trends Journal** previously pointed out the unfair advantage and illegal manipulations Amazon has engaged in, on its flagship "Amazon.com" product selling platform.

We have noted that Amazon can and has used the privileged data it gains via its platform concerning third party sellers, in order to develop and sell its own endorsed "Amazon" products against those of sellers.

See, for example:

- "AMAZON USING DIGITAL BOOK DOMINANCE TO CENSOR" (16 Mar 2021)
- "NEW COALITION WILL PRESS FOR STRICTER ANTITRUST MEASURES" (13 Apr 2021)
- "AMAZON CAUGHT ILLEGALLY UNDERCUTTING COMPETITION" (19 Oct 2021)

Now imagine Amazon being able to train a generative text based AI system on all the digital content on its platform (and beyond, by scouring internet content, digitized works of history, etc.).

It could very possibly create the most sophisticated "storytelling" AI yet seen, and use that AI to generate content to sell against human authors that publish their content on Amazon's Kindle book platform.

And Amazon's content could more and more rigorously conform to ideological standards it already deploys for its Amazon Studios productions.

**What Human Creatives Can (And Should) Do**

AI trained with politically correct and woke strictures is actually a huge achille's heel, that human creatives can exploit—and they will likely have to, in order to survive economically, but also, to thrive artistically and intellectually.

Acerbic critics have pointed out the mind-numbing, ideologically formulaic pablum of movies and TV series like Amazon Studios *The Lord of the Rings: The Rings of Power* and the "M-SHE-U" (a wave of Marvel movies and TV shows presenting women as relentlessly boring woke stereotypes).

The shackles Hollywood and Amazon place on content creation will (at least for a time) bind the AI systems of the tech oligarchy.

Human creatives, whether visual artists, novelists, non fiction writers and historians, can continue to thrive by creating content these rigid "guardians of woke" don't allow, as we noted in "WANT TO FIND YOUR NICHE AS A HUMAN CONTENT CREATOR? GO ANTI-WOKE AND FULL 'DIS-INFO'" (7 Mar 2023).

Utilizing technology to create in freedom is becoming harder. We detailed how companies were pushing "Software-as-as-Service" platforms in order to more rigorously control the kinds of content creatives can produce. (See "YOU WILL OWN NO SOFTWARE AND BE HAPPY—PART ONE" 18 Oct 2022 and "YOU WILL OWN NO SOFTWARE AND BE HAPPY—PART TWO" 1 Nov 2022.)

With Microsoft Office introducing an "AI Copilot" into its productivity software, and Google and others likely to follow suit, it may only be a matter of time before most

content created via cloud-based systems is subject to limitations and censorship. (See "READY FOR AN AI COPILOT?" 21 Mar 2023.)

It's important for human authors to seek out forms of technology that are censorship resistant, and to participate in those technologies. Human creatives need to make the effort to publish content on web3 platforms that are permissionless and committed to censorship free content.

And humans should not just sit by and accept the next-level AI hi-jacking and self-enriching monetization of human knowledge by tech giants.

We warned about the consequences of allowing that, in "CREATIVE CONTENT INFRINGEMENT OF DEEP LEARNING AI HAS MONUMENTAL IMPLICATIONS" (7 Feb 2023), and have reported on some efforts to protect human creatives. (See "ARTISTS SUE TO STOP AI COMPANY FROM PROFITING OFF HUMAN-CREATED WORKS" 14 Feb 2023 and "TOP TREND 2023, AI WE OWN YOU: HUMAN ARTISTRY CAMPAIGN OUT TO PRESERVE RIGHTS OF HUMAN CREATIVES" 21 Mar 2023.)

Governments and the technocratic masters of the universe would like nothing more than to consign the bulk of increasingly outmoded humanity to UBI (Universal Basic Income) credits, and restricted lives in "15-minute cities," confined to consuming less, procreating less, and wiling away useless hours immersed in a "VR" metaverse.

Elites want to play God and control the real world. They will be quite happy to create and dictate that the rest of us live in VR ghettos.

Orwell, in his novel *1984*, observed that the totalitarian impulse seeks power "above all over the mind."

The novel depicted authorities imposing progressive restrictions on the use of language (generally referred to as "Newspeak"), down to canceling of words, in order to exert thought control on individuals.

Orwell warned that by controlling language and expression, authorities could deprive people of the ability to formulate the thoughts that could communicate—to themselves or others—coherent rationales of freedom, or resistance.

At one point, an apparatchik in the novel comments, “it’s a beautiful thing, the destruction of words.”

Should Amazon deploy generative AI to produce AI written books for sale on Kindle, the 21st century version of Newspeak will move into cultural overdrive.

## THIS WEEK IN SURVEILLANCE

### THE TANTALIZING PROSPECT OF “SURVEILLANCE GPT”

Using deep-learning neural net AI to mine public (and certainly other) data, and report on travelers to government agents?

It’s coming, and it will likely start at the border, as a “tool” to help DHS vet migrants.

An exec at Babel Street, a provider of citizen surveillance software to the U.S. Federal government, has suggested employing a ChatGPT-like AI trained on publicly available data to build risk assessment profiles that could be used by border agents.

Declan Trezise, Babel’s VP of Global Solutions, discussed the idea during a webinar this past week, according to journalist Jack Poulsen, who reported the matter on his substack.

“I love the idea that there could be a model — a risk model — that could be built,” Trezise said about the prospect. “A large data risk model. You know, a Border GPT.”

Trezise detailed what such a system would involve, noting it would fill a gap where "biometrics" on individuals were not available:

> *"A [traveler's] risk can be assessed quite quickly if you have good biometrics. But in the absence of that, you may want to pull together things like publicly available information. You want to get a watch list that can be updated as quickly as possible with as much accuracy as possible. The border guard wants to know everything they can about a person before that person is in front of them. That's where we're going to start to focus some emerging technologies. We're on the cusp of a revolution in terms of AI."*
>
> *("Surveillance firm proposes 'Border GPT'," 21 Jun 2023.)*

Though the use of powerful AI chatbots was discussed at the webinar only in the context of a border use case involving migrants, Babel Street's history with U.S. intelligence agencies suggests use of the technology might not stay at the border.

**The Trends Journal** has previously detailed the controversial use of Babel Street's "Babel X" AI-powered software by the government, to monitor social media posts, gauge citizen "sentiments," and screen National Guard troops to ensure "right think." (See "WATCH THE SNARK: AI CAN NOW DETECT SARCASM ON SOCIAL MEDIA," 11 May 2021.)

We also identified Babel Street as a "third party" data broker provider to the Federal government of citizen data siphoned from cell phones. ("U.S. INTEL WORKING WITH 'DATA BROKERS' TO TRACK AMERICANS, NEW EFF REPORT SHOWS," 12 Jul 2022.)

Federal Intelligence agencies are (supposedly) barred from directly gathering various kinds of surveillance data on American citizens.

But they have used a loophole in laws to buy data from private companies that gives them privileged info on Americans, including cell phone tracking data and much more.

***TRENDPOST:*** *The fact that Babel Street, a major conduit for U.S. intelligence agencies to skirt the spirit of Constitutionally protected privacy rights of Americans, is talking about ChatGPT style powered surveillance, is significant.*

*They have a track record of providing sophisticated surveillance software, and deep ties to U.S. Intel.*

*Combining AI that can consume huge swathes of data from public and government resources, and convey that info instantly, in the conversational style of an human-like AI "informant," is the tantalizing prospect of "Surveillance GPT."*

*Given the history, it's easy to see where this is going. Generative AI will be used by governments, including in the U.S., to identify, mark and screen citizens according to Ideological risks to the regime.*

*Babel X was used in 2021 to help ensure the ideological conformance of National Guard troops chosen to deploy in Washington D.C. to supposedly deter "Insurrectionist" threats.*

*That was theater used to bludgeon political enemies, undermine American protest and redress of grievance rights, and turn attention away from truly insidious deep state and elitist driven election manipulation.*

*From "Russian Collusion" to U.S. funding of a Wuhan China virology lab, to government endorsement of political violence and intimidation during the 2020 "summer of BLM," to 500 million in "Zuckerbucks" to undermine voting integrity, to U.S. Intel and MSM suppression of damaging Hunter Biden laptop info, to Fed infiltration and instigating violence of Jan 6 protests to bolster a "violent insurrectionist" narrative…there was a lot of gaslighting and redirection work to do.*

*But even all that manipulation is nothing compared to the dystopian promise of increasingly sophisticated AI. ChatGPT-style AI surveillance reporting will likely bring ideological surveillance and canceling of citizen travel and other rights to a whole new level.*

## IMF SOFTENS CRYPTO STANCE…FOR THE MOMENT

A new report by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has moderated previous calls for outright bans of cryptocurrencies.

Is it just a change in tack to avoid blowback, as the international financial system continues to ready CBDCs (Central Bank Digital Currencies)?

According to the report, which focused on financial system matters in Latin America and the Caribbean:

> *"If well designed, CBDCs can strengthen the usability, resilience, and efficiency of payment systems and increase financial inclusion in [the Latin America and Caribbean regions]. While a few countries have completely banned crypto assets given their risks, this approach may not be effective in the long run. The region should instead focus on addressing the drivers of crypto demand, including*

*citizens' unmet digital payment needs, and on improving transparency, by recording crypto asset transactions in national statistics."*

The report acknowledged that use of cryptocurrencies in places like Brazil, Argentina, Colombia, and Ecuador were among the world leaders in terms of adoption of crypto technologies.

Some of those countries, like Argentina, have seen their fiat currencies ravaged by inflation rates that have recently topped 100 percent annually.

In addition to looking toward more promising stores of value, cryptos continue to be utilized by many in and from these regions, to reduce the costs of remittances and cross border payments, and to access financial services while being "unbanked."

Many migrant workers regularly send money back to their countries of origin to support family, etc, and have found ways to exchange and transmit that value that are cheaper and faster than legacy financial services.

***TRENDPOST:*** *The IMF's new report should not be greeted with undue optimism. It hardly represents an endorsement of cryptos themselves, though it does appear to be somewhat more resigned to the reality of what they are providing users.*

*The legacy international financial system remains intent on co-opting the innovation of cryptos, while retaining the kind of system control that has allowed enormous power and advantage to governments and financial elites.*

*What will governments and organizations like the IMF and FATF (the Financial Action Task Force, an inter-governmental body which bills itself as a global money laundering and terrorist financing watchdog) do, if and when CBDCs are more widely introduced, but substantially resisted by citizenries?*

*Globalist authorities and leading financial powers like the U.S., the EU and China have every narrow incentive to push CBDCs and suppress cryptos.*

*But their own rivalries, together with rising regions with weaker currencies, are already increasingly choosing the path of innovation, and the economic synergies and efficiencies that are ensuing.*

*In other words, splintered geopolitics may favor a continued rise—however rocky—of crypto technologies.*

## BLOCKCHAIN BATTLES

### FROM "OPERATION CHOKEPOINT" TO "OPERATION STICK A FORK IN IT"

On the surface, it has seemed a (sort of) positive development: the world's largest asset manager, BlackRock, one of the largest U.S. based banks, Bank of New York-Mellon, and the largest U.S. crypto exchange, Coinbase, all working together to gain the greenlight for a Bitcoin Spot ETF.

News last week that BlackRock had applied for SEC (Securities and Exchange Commission) approval to offer such an investment vehicle, has certainly appeared to have a positive effect on the price of Bitcoin, and the crypto sector more generally.

Bitcoin experienced gains of over 18 percent in the seven day span from 16 to 23 June, according to CoinMarketCap.com. And Ethereum's gains stood at 13 percent.

Cointelegraph and many other crypto outlets noted the positive sentiments and related activity surrounding BlackRock's move. (See "Blackrock's spot Bitcoin ETF renews optimism, sparks wave of new filings," 21 Jun 2023.)

So-called “institutional adoption” of cryptos has long been seen as something to be desired, by more mainstream crypto advocates, who have also cited regulatory clarity as a needed component for adoption.

But some are speculating that BlackRock’s move may not ultimately lead to anything good at all for Bitcoin or cryptos.

The potential—but very real—danger lies in the enormous amount of control that institutions might gain over Bitcoin, and the future of the network itself.

Within BlackRock’s application is a section that details how the company might handle a fork of the Bitcoin protocol.

Critics contend that If BlackRock and its partners are awarded a Bitcoin Spot ETF, and gain a lion’s share stake in bitcoin, the company (perhaps in collusion with gov-financial sector interests) could well influence a possible fork of bitcoin, in terms of deciding which “fork” would be considered the legitimate continuance of the bitcoin network.

**Levels of Manipulation, Possible Motives**

Technically, miner / validator nodes of the bitcoin network are the ones who “vote” and decide on any proposed changes or upgrades to the bitcoin network.

A majority of nodes must adopt proposed software upgrades within certain time frames for the network to accept the upgrades.

In the case of the bitcoin network, several times in the past, a minority of network nodes have opted to split off from the majority decision and network, and form their own networks, running versions of the bitcoin code that either contained, or excluded the proposed software upgrades.

Past “forks” of Bitcoin have resulted in Bitcoin Gold (BTG), for example, and Bitcoin Cash (BCH).

But only the network in which the majority of nodes have voted in agreement regarding revisions, has been accepted as the "original line" of Bitcoin (BTC).

And there's the nut.

Could BlackRock gain enough of a stake, to influence changes in the bitcoin network that would favor their own interests?

Could they back a minority fork of bitcoin, and together with government authorities like the SEC, force a minority fork of the bitcoin network to be designated as "BTC", and allow fiat onramps and off ramps for the preferred fork, while suppressing a disfavored alternate, even if it was the network that gained majority node approval?

Crypto Casey has an excellent breakdown of this line of thinking. (See "Bitcoin ETF Explained! Wall St Money Flooding In Soon? US Creating Fake BTC to Steal Real?", posted 22 June 2023 on YouTube.)

There are less conspiratorial concerns that also don't spell good things.

If authorities declare that a few select cryptos like Bitcoin, and perhaps Ethereum, deserve exclusion from being classed as "securities," while the rest of the crypto sector comes under traditional securities regulations in the U.S., that would likely be enough to cripple the altcoin market.

Investor Mark Lesko recently discussed that possibility, and said he fears that BlackRock's move signals that "something bad is coming." (See "There is Something Very Bad Coming - Mark Yusko" by Savvy Finance on YouTube.)

Lesko also said he believes that since financial institutions gained approval for futures Bitcoin ETFs, they have likely been aggressively shorting bitcoin, as they have done with gold, to manipulate and suppress prices, while propping up flows of investment into other preferred asset classes.

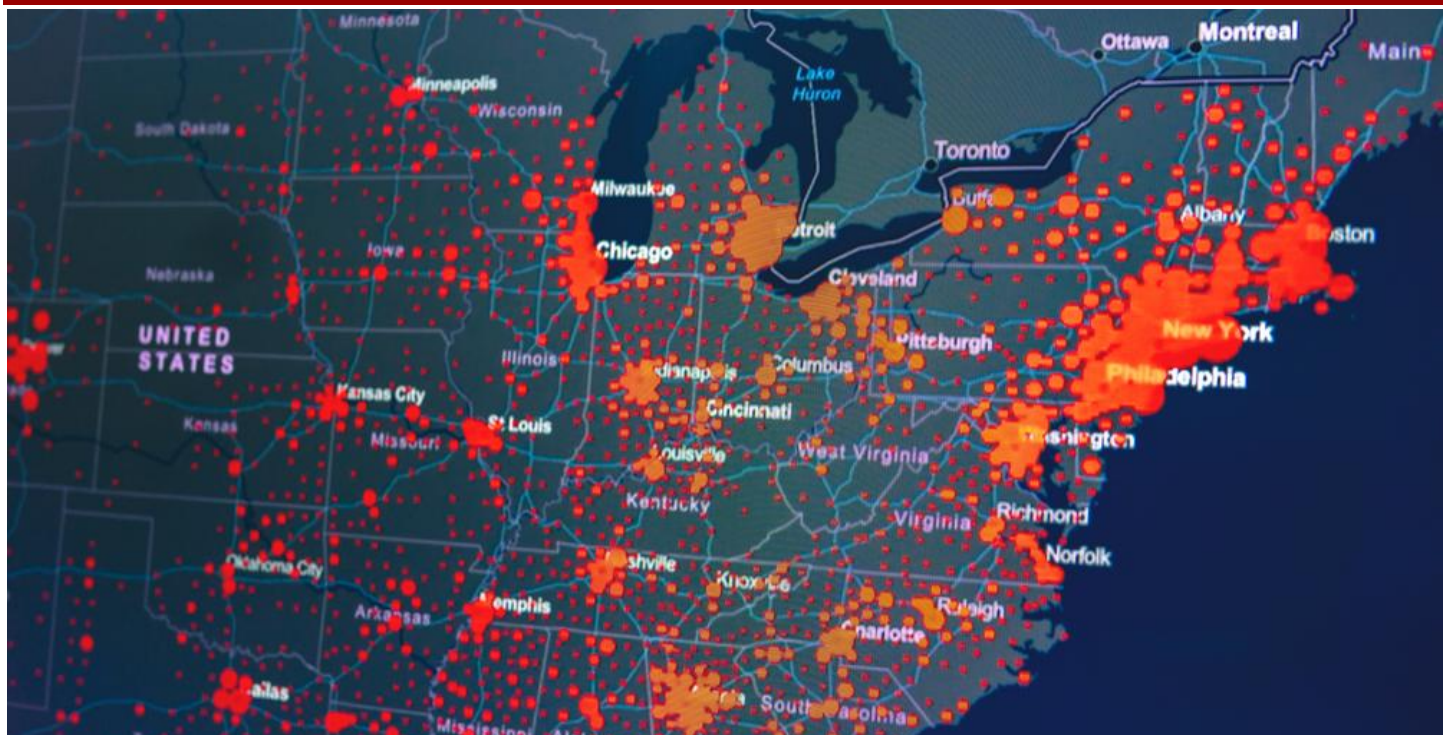
Lesko says he still ultimately believes crypto innovations will prevail, because "the infrastructure of trust will be replaced by the infrastructure of truth."

By that, he means things like the verifiability of blockchain transactions and databases provides a transparency that represents a superior benefit compared with the opaqueness of siloed legacy financial systems.

***TRENDPOST:*** *It's very likely not a question of whether manipulation is going on, but what the intentions of the manipulation ultimately are. Some believe BlackRock has almost certainly been buying up bitcoin at relative bargain basement prices compared to its 2021 highs.*

*A more positive view of it all suggests that as BlackRock has actually influenced investors to acquire a portion of their portfolios in gold as a more or less standard strategy, they may be positioning bitcoin, and perhaps ethereum, to be added to mainstream investment strategies.*

*Authorities might see themselves as striking a compromise that will cast themselves as not "anti-crypto," while strangling most altcoins, and marching on with plans to co-opt major innovations into CBDCs.*




## COVID REVELATIONS: CDC KNEW ABOUT BREAKTHROUGH CASES IN JAN 2021, AND HOTEZ CITES CHILD STUDY SHOWING TINY COVID RISK TO ARGUE VAXXING KIDS WAS RIGHT

Dr. Peter Hotez, a vaccine developer and “TV expert” during the COVID war, has been spending a lot of Twitter time lately defending his refusal to debate RFK Jr. on the subject of vaccine history and safety.

But many of his tweets have just dug his hole deeper.

One that stood out this past week was his citing of a U.K. study on the efficacy of COVID mRNA vaccines in protecting children and young people from serious COVID harms.

The problem? The study itself shows the infinitesimally small risk young people have from COVID.

Meanwhile, former COVID era CDC Director Rachel Walensky was back in the news, for emails showing she knew as early as January 2021 that “breakthrough cases” (ie. cases of transmission where individuals had been vaccinated) were occurring.

Those emails appear to substantiate a willful deception, since Walensky continued to claim that taking the vaccines was necessary to stop transmission long after she knew the truth.

**Hotez Cites a Study, Ignores the Math**

The controversy over Dr. Peter Hotez criticizing an RFK Jr. appearance on the Joe Rogan podcast as spreading vaccine “misinfo,” then refusing an invitation to go on the podcast and debate the Democrat presidential candidate, has continued to play out on Twitter.

In defending his COVID record, Hotez on 20 June tweeted a link to a U.K. study purporting to support his extreme efforts pushing for children and young people to get vaccinated.

But the University of Oxford study in question, sensationally titled “COVID-19 is a leading cause of death in children and young people in the US,” actually presented an incredibly weak case for vaccinating the young, if numbers mean anything.

By the study’s own numbers, the risk of serious harm to the young from the COVID virus was negligible, to say the least:

- Overall death of those aged 0 to 19 from COVID: 1 per 100 thousand: 1 unit is equal to 0.001 percent of 100 thousand units.
- 4.3 per 100 thousand for those younger than 1 year: 4.3 units is equal to 0.0043 percent of 100 thousand units:
- 0.6 per 100 thousand for those aged 1 to 4 years: .6 of one unit is equal to 0.0006 percent of 100 thousand units

- 0.4 per 100 thousand for those aged 5 to 9 years: .4 of one unit is equal to 0.0004 percent of 100 thousand units.
- 0.5 per 100 thousand for those aged 10 to 14 years; .5 of one unit is equal to 0.0005 percent of 100 thousand units.
- 1.8 per 100 thousand for those aged 15 to 19 years: 1.8 units is equal to 0.0018 percent of 100 thousand units

The study's headline that COVID was a "leading cause of death" for children demonstrated the art of misleading headlines.

Young people are much less prone in general to mortality risks, than any other demographic group. No cause of death among this demographic is higher than 2 percent, which is where COVID ranked.

In other words, of the tiny overall .00162 percent death rate for people aged 0 to 19 years of age, 2 percent of that .00162 percent succumbed due to COVID.

And as one Twitter observer, Kristen, pointed out, the study numbers are even more damning:

> *Kristen*
> *@Kriscilicious*
> *There are ~80 million people aged 0-19 in the US, and in a course of 2 years, 1300 of them died from "COVID-related causes." That's .00162% of that demographic.*
>
> *Of that .00162%, 99.98% of them had serious comorbidities. [ie. medical conditions affecting their overall health]*

Hotez may be feeling unwanted glare from the spotlight right now. But he put himself out as an avid COVID war "TV Expert," whose recommendations on behalf of big pharma vaccines shifted as the reality of their limited efficacy and problems became impossible to ignore. (See "DISINFO AND MISINFO: THE WAY ELITES JUSTIFY CRUSHING OPPOSITION," 20 Jun 2023.)

During his ongoing Twitter blizzard defending his refusal to debate, Hotez has thanked support from people like *LA Times* writer Michael Hitzik. Hitzik's endorsement of Hotez's is unsurprising, considering his own radical opinions of the COVID War era:

MENU Newsday

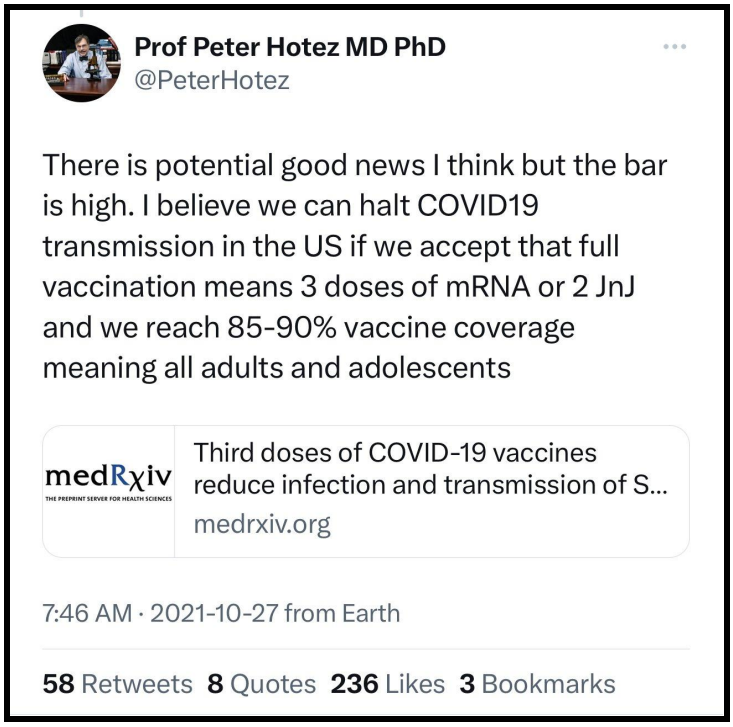
OPINION / COMMENTARY

**Mocking anti-vaxxers' deaths is ghoulish, yes — but necessary**

Employer mandates in the U.S. have raised vaccination rates at workplaces, as United Airlines has shown. Credit: TNS/Patrick T. Fallon/AFP

**By Michael Hiltzik, Los Angeles Times**
January 11, 2022

Long after it became generally known that the COVID vaccines didn't stop transmission of the virus, Hotez was tweeting that "full vaccination, including to adolescents, could "halt COVID19 transmission":




In addition to that kind of propaganda, Hotez has long been inclined to deploy radical rhetoric to demonize those opposed to taking vaccines.

In 2018, for instance, Hotez labeled anti-vaxxers as a “hate group”, as reported by nvic.org:

> *“Anti-vaccine organizations camouflage themselves as a political group, but I call them for what they really are: a hate group,” Hotez said. “They are a hate group that hates their family and hates their children.”*
> *(“Baylor’s Doc Hotez Bullies Parents of Vaccine Injured Children,” 10 Mar 2018.)*

***TRENDPOST:*** *Over the whole period of what Gerald Celente has termed the COVID War,* ***The Trends Journal*** *has noted evidence always shows that children, though especially targeted to take vaccines, were the least likely to experience serious COVID risks.*

*Some of our coverage has included:*

- *"NO HEALTHY INDIVIDUALS UNDER 50 DIED FROM COVID-19 IN ISRAEL: DATA" (30 May 2023)*
- *"MORE PARENTS: DON'T JAB MY CHILDREN" (20 Dec 2022)*
- *"DEMOCRATS CAN RUN, BUT THEY CAN'T HIDE FROM CDC CHILD VACCINE DECISION" (25 Oct 2022)*
- *"HONG KONG FORCES ALL CHILDREN UNDER 5 YEARS OLD TO TAKE VACCINE IF THEY WANT TO LIVE A NORMAL LIFE" (13 Sep 2022)*
- *"ISRAELI STUDY: GET THE COVID JAB, GET CARDIAC" (7 Jun 2022)*
- *"NYC MAYOR ADAMS DICTATES MASK MANDATES FOR CHILDREN UNDER 5" (5 Apr 2022)*
- *"CHILDREN'S INNATE IMMUNE SYSTEM BEATS COVID. WHY VAX THEM?" (1 Mar 2022)*
- *"COVID ERA DRUG DYSTOPIA KILLING FAR MORE AMERICAN YOUTH THAN COVID" (1 Feb 2022)*
- *"COVID DRIVING KIDS CRAZY" (14 Dec 2021)*
- *"WHILE U.S. RAMPS UP KID JABS, OTHER COUNTRIES IN NO RUSH TO VAX CHILDREN" (23 Nov 2021)*
- *"ACTUAL COVID RISKS DON'T IMPACT VAX NARRATIVE" (19 Oct 2021)*
- *"NORDIC NATIONS: NO MODERNA JAB FOR THE YOUTH" (12 Oct 2021)*
- *"GET MODERNA COVID JAB, GET HEART INFLAMMATION?" (24 Aug 2021)*
- *"DOCTOR CLAIMS COVID VAX IS A 'POISON DEATH SHOT'" (24 Aug 2021)*
- *"YET ANOTHER REASON FOR VACCINE HESITANCY" (29 Jun 2021)*
- *"CDC DATA PROVES RISING VACCINE HEALTH ISSUES" (13 Apr 2021)*
- *"CBS TALKS UP U.K. EFFORT TO VACCINATE CHILDREN" (16 Feb 2021)*
- *"ARE THE COVID VACCINES SAFE? "EVIDENCE IS LACKING'" (16 Feb 2021)*
- *"COVID VACCINE: 'SIGNIFICANT SAFETY CONCERNS'" (15 Dec 2020)*

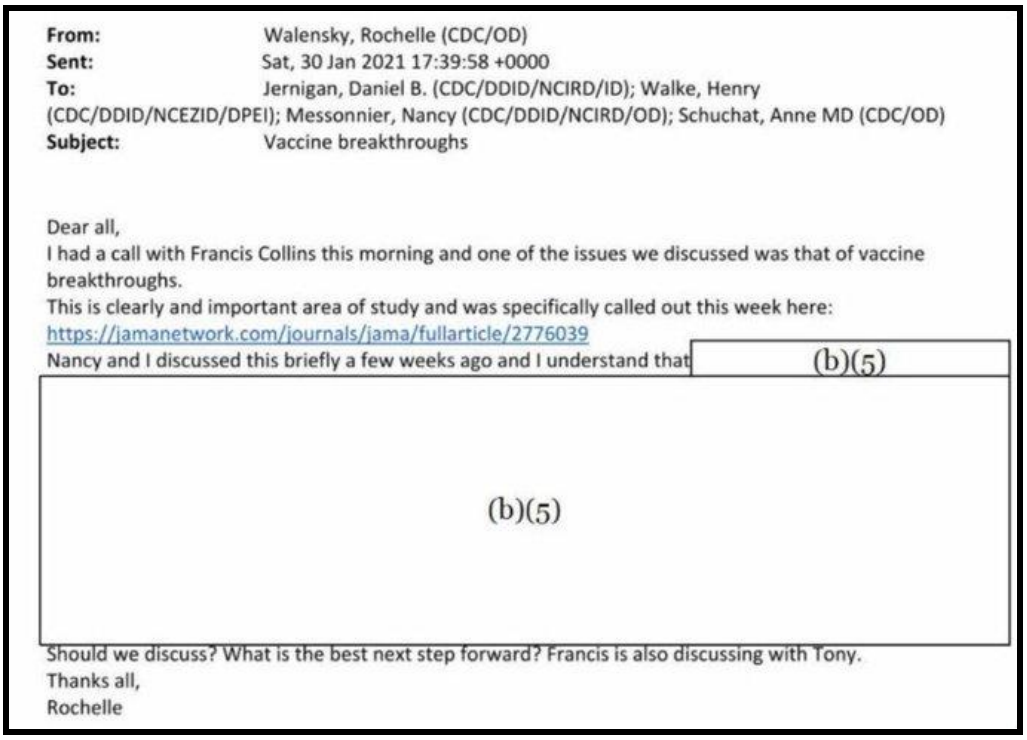
**Walensky Knew COVID Vaccines Didn't Stop Transmission Much Earlier Than Previously Admitted**

Former CDC Director Rachel Walensky is on record claiming in Congressional testimony that her knowledge concerning the inability of vaccines to stop COVID virus transmission only changed after months of data and evolving "science" understanding on the matter.

But newly revealed emails contradict that testimony.

The emails, referencing conversation between Walensky and then-NIH Director Dr. Francis Collins, from January 2021, show that Walensky knew people who were vaccinated were experiencing “breakthrough” cases of contracting and spreading COVID.

In one email, Walensky noted the breakthrough infections, as pointed out by *The Washington Examiner* and Hans Mahncke:



**From:** Walensky, Rochelle (CDC/OD)
**Sent:** Sat, 30 Jan 2021 17:39:58 +0000
**To:** Jernigan, Daniel B. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/ID); Walke, Henry (CDC/DDID/NCEZID/DPEI); Messonnier, Nancy (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD); Schuchat, Anne MD (CDC/OD)
**Subject:** Vaccine breakthroughs

Dear all,
I had a call with Francis Collins this morning and one of the issues we discussed was that of vaccine breakthroughs.
This is clearly and important area of study and was specifically called out this week here:
https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/2776039
Nancy and I discussed this briefly a few weeks ago and I understand that (b)(5)

(b)(5)

Should we discuss? What is the best next step forward? Francis is also discussing with Tony.
Thanks all,
Rochelle

*(“New emails show COVID vaccine mandates were based on a lie,” 20 Jun 2023)*

COVID mRNA vaccines did not become widely available to the public until January of 2021.

So the CDC basically knew in real time, from the earliest roll out of the experimental vaccines, that they did not stop transmission or contraction of the virus.

Despite that, the government and MSM allies relentlessly pressured people to take the vaccine “to protect others” and “stop the spread.”

The Federal government mandated vaccines for many government workers and military personnel, citing the rationale that the vaccines prevented or greatly reduced transmission.

In March of 2021, Walensky repeated the official line, claiming in a CNN interview that "Vaccinated people do not carry the virus, don't get sick."

https://twitter.com/kevinnbass/status/1670986558898569217

Many other officials, including President Joe Biden, pressed for Americans to get vaccinated, citing the mantra.

That rationale was not only false, but it now appears that officials at the highest levels knew it was false from the beginning.

For related reading, see *"WALENSKY FINALLY ADMITS COVID-19 VACCINES DON'T STOP THE SPREAD, INSISTS SHE DIDN'T MISLEAD PUBLIC,"* 25 April 2023.

**Addendum: mRNA Bivalent Vaccines Found to Contain DNA**

A new article by Dr. Joseph Mercola details a study that has found yet more troubling aspects of already controversial COVID "vaccine" technologies. ("Contaminated COVID Products and Green Monkey Virus," 26 Jun 2023.)

Mercola quoted the study, which found unexpected and unsafe levels of DNA:

> "Several methods were deployed to assess the nucleic acid composition of four expired vials of the Moderna and Pfizer bivalent mRNA vaccines. Two vials from each vendor were evaluated ... Multiple assays support DNA contamination that exceeds the European Medicines Agency (EMA) 330ng/mg requirement and the FDAs 10ng/dose requirements ..."

According to Mercola, the DNA found in the vaccine examples could alter DNA of those receiving the vaccines:

> *"[T]hese DNA contaminants also can alter the human genome. As explained by McKernan, genomic sequencing involves reading the letters of the genome, A, T, C and G, which make up the DNA code. Both DNA and RNA can be sequenced in this manner.*
>
> *"DNA can be likened to a copy of the hard drive of your cell, while RNA is like your task manager, dictating the software program being run in a given moment. When you sequence RNA, you get a sense of what the cell is being instructed to do, while sequencing DNA tells you everything the cell could possibly do if the proper instructions are present."*

Merola said that anyone who received a COVID gene level technology vaccine may want to follow the I-RECOVER POST-VACCINE TREATMENT PROTOCOL, which was put together by medical professionals to mitigate potential harms from the vaccines.

The protocol was developed by the FLCCC Alliance (Front Line COVID-19 Critical Care Alliance) a group of professional critical care specialists formed in March 2020.

According to their website:

> *"We aim to save lives and improve health by advancing protocols based on the latest science, data, and clinical observations.*
>
> *"Our founding physicians are highly published and world-renowned thought leaders, with deep knowledge and expertise in a range of important health issues.*
>
> *"The organization has reached millions of people through its protocols, website, webinars, newsletters, social media, speaking engagements, and media appearances. Our protocols are used by healthcare providers worldwide and have helped countless thousands of people."*

## RFK JR POINTS OUT HOTEZ CLOSE TIES TO CHINESE COVID EXPERIMENTS

The war between "TV expert" COVID vaccine pusher Dr. Peter Hotez and rising Democrat Presidential candidate Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. just witnessed a late-breaking salvo.

Kennedy retweeted a substack article showing deep ties between Hotez and Chinese coronavirus researchers who may well be responsible for a Wuhan lab disaster that let loose COVID19.

"Dr. Peter Hotez was deeply enmeshed with Chinese military scientists at the Wuhan lab. Read this article. Just… wow," Kennedy commented.

He added:

> *"Guess what some of those scientists were doing in 2013? Demonstrating the artificial insertion of a furin cleavage site similar to the one in SARS-CoV2…*
>
> *"No wonder Dr. Hotez criticizes congressional hearings on the origins of Covid-19, stating that they are 'inviting fringe elements to testify and promote outlandish conspiracy theories,' even warning that investigation will 'undermine the fabric of science in America'." #Kennedy24*

The substack article Kennedy was citing, by Kanekoa News, quoted several American virus experts who have noted details about the Chinese research that provide clear markers, or a "smoking gun" concerning manmade aspects of the COVID19 virus.

The article quoted Rutgers Dr. Richard Ebright, who has long pointed out dangerous research occurring between American and Chinese virus counterparts:

*"'SARS-CoV-2 is the only member of the SARS-related betacoronavirus group that contains a furin cleavage site. The SARS-CoV-2 furin cleavage site exhibits unusual codon usage, and the SARS-CoV-2 furin cleavage site is located at a position that previously has been used to engineer coronaviruses having enhanced infectivity.'"*

*"Further compounding the intrigue, Dr. David Baltimore, a renowned US virologist and co-discoverer of reverse transcriptase, expresses his belief that the furin cleavage indicates a laboratory origin for the virus, stating, "When I first saw the furin cleavage site in the viral sequence, with its arginine codons, I said to my wife it was the smoking gun for the origin of the virus."*

Hotez, who has been tweeting a lot lately, or rather mostly tweeting MSM defenses of his decision not to try to debate RFK Jr. on vaccine issues for a pile of offered cash to a favorite charity, hasn't yet responded to Kennedy's new challenge.

The controversy between the two began after Hotez criticized an appearance by Kennedy on the Joe Rogan podcast, saying that the Democrat candidate should not be given a forum to voice "misinformation."

During the COVID War, Hotez was a frequent TV "expert," pushing for people to get vaccinated, while changing his assessments multiple times, undermining not only his credibility, but the whole official narrative concerning the efficacy and safety of the COVID vaccines.

When challenged to a debate by Kennedy, Hotez backed down and offered excuses, saying that debating the surging Democrat candidate would be a "no-win" situation.

**The Trends Journal** has long pointed out the probability that COVID19 was a result of unbound scientists dangerously experimenting with viruses.

Some of our touchstone articles include:

- "GATES LONG ON FAKE MEAT, SHORT ON CRYPTO" (23 Feb 2021)

- "BATSH*T CRAZY: WUHAN WALLS CLOSING IN AROUND FAUCI" (18 May 2021)
- "RAND PAUL LAYS DOWN LAW TO FAUCI" (20 Jul 2021)
- "GOVERNMENT COVER-UP OF FAUCI'S WUHAN LAB FUNDING SPREADS" (3 Aug 2021)
- "NO BOUNDARIES: SCIENTISTS CONTINUE DANGEROUS VIRUS EXPERIMENTS DESPITE LIKELY WUHAN LAB DISASTER" (1 Nov 2022)
- "ANOTHER GOVERNMENT AGENCY NOW BACKS WUHAN COVID VIRUS ORIGIN" (28 Feb 2023)

## AS FORECAST, COVID LOCKDOWNS LEFT KIDS FAT AND DUMB

You don't need to be an education professional to know that if you tell students they can no longer attend in-person classes for about three years they will face unprecedented challenges during their lifetime of education.

Statistics are just coming out now that prove our forecast that COVID lockdowns will lead to a degeneration of young minds in the U.S.

*The Wall Street Journal*, citing the National Assessment of Educational Progress, reported last week that math and reading performances among 13-year-olds in the country hit their lowest levels in decades. The report said 1990 was the last time math scores were so low, and 2004 for reading.

The report said 13-year-olds who took the NAEP exam last fall scored an average of 256 out of 500 in reading and 271 out of 500 in math.

“This is a very serious matter,” Peggy Carr, head of the National Center for Education Statistics, which administers the tests, told *USA Today.* “The big message here is it is a long road ahead of us.”

Carr said it is unclear what the long-term issues will be because intervention does not seem to be helping the issue.

“There are signs of risk for a generation,” she said.

Miguel Cardona, the U.S. education secretary, told the paper that the latest data is further evidence of what the Biden-Harris administration “recognized from Day One: that the pandemic would have a devastating impact on students’ learning across the country and that it would take years of effort and investment to reverse the damage as well as address the 11-year decline that preceded it.”

Chalkbeat, an education news website, noted that standardized tests are only one measure of academic achievement, but the scores do have some weight because they “are predictive of students’—and the country’s—success.”

“One recent study found that state scores on a separate NAEP eighth-grade math test predicted high school graduation, adult income, and incarceration rates,” the report said.

The fourth and fifth grades are generally seen as foundational when it comes to acquiring reading and math skills—and these children would have been forced into a yearslong intellectual hibernation because of politicians like California Governor Gavin Newsom.

Sean Reardon, a Stanford professor who studies education, told *The New York Times* that his research from 41 states found that schools are generally ill-equipped to deal with the issue that has, on average, left students in the U.S. a half a year behind in math studies and one-third a year lagging in reading. The problem is most pronounced in schools in dense locations.

“The worry,” he said, is that this “pandemic” exacerbated “educational inequality.”

***TRENDPOST:*** *It is discouraging to read articles like the one presented in The Wall Street Journal that continue to place blame on the "coronavirus pandemic" for wreaking such havoc and the country's education system.*

*As Gerald Celente has long said, it was not the "pandemic" that forced your child to stay home, it was power hungry politicians and the Silicon Valley tech bros. (See "ZUCKERBERG SAYS 'ESTABLISHMENT' ASKED FACEBOOK TO CENSOR COVID-19 INFO THAT PROVED TO BE ACCURATE" 13 Jun 2023, "RESEARCHERS SAY GLOBAL MORTALITY RATE IN 2020 WAS 'UNREMARKABLE,' UNDERCUTTING KEY PREMISE OF THE COVID WAR" 13 Jun 2023, "NO HEALTHY INDIVIDUALS UNDER 50 DIED FROM COVID-19 IN ISRAEL: DATA" 30 May 2023 and "COVID-19 FALLOUT: KIDS HAVING TROUBLE SPEAKING THANKS TO LOCKDOWNS" 23 May 2023.)*

*Our 15 September 2020 issue's Trend Forecast read:*

> *"Under the New ABnormal, working parents must stay home as millions of children are being forced to learn online from home. The economic stress on parents in the world of the New ABnormal will prove costly.*
>
> *"Furthermore, the added mental stress being imposed on children, who are, by the data, not victims of the virus, will instill them with fear while sapping their creativity."*

*Since the beginning of summer 2020, political leaders in the U.S., backed by their health experts and amplified by a mainstream media glad to accommodate, have been putting forth the notion that schools are "super-spreader" environments requiring the need to be extremely cautious about reopening.*

*On 14 December 2021, when most students in the U.S. were returning to in-person classes, we published an article titled, "SCHOOLS: THE NEW 'Abnormal.'"*

*We noted that schools around the U.S. reported experiencing increases in unruly behaviors such as talking in class, treating adults and one another disrespectfully, and strewing trash about, to more serious issues.*

*Peter Faustino, on the board of the National Association of School Psychologists, says that a normal full academic year's worth of mental health and behavioral incidents have occurred in just the first three months of the current school year; "I think the pandemic was like an earthquake and I think we are seeing that tidal wave hit shore," he said.*

*Stanford University, in collaboration with the Associated Press, found that the public school enrollment from kindergarten to twelfth grade has declined by 1.2 million students in the first two years of the outbreak, with home-schooling up by 30 percent. The Wall Street Journal said the study noted three possible explanations, including truancy, the jump in home-schooling, and a jump in toddlers skipping kindergarten.*

*The paper said it is "more worrisome" if children "decided that going to school is a waste, perhaps because they weren't learning much."*

*"If many stopped going to school altogether, then the pandemic learning loss may be even greater than has been reported and may never be made up."*

## ‘FAR-RIGHT’ SURGES IN GERMANY AMID ECONOMIC UNCERTAINTY, AS WE LONG FORECAST

Establishment politicians in Germany are pressing panic buttons amid the surge in popularity for the country’s top “far-right” political party—the Alternative for Germany, or AfD—that seems poised to make gains in local and national elections based on financial hardship and disgust for the ruling elite.

*The New York Times* spoke to Ina Radzheit, an insurance agent, who recently joined a gathering inside a German restaurant.  She stated, while she’s on the fence on whether to support AfD, she is at least open to the idea.

She was asked about the state of German affairs.

“What’s wrong?” she told the paper. “Where do I start?”

The paper said she rattled off a bunch of issues from uncontrolled immigration to Berlin's promotion of war in Ukraine.

"I can't say now if I would ever vote for the AfD, but I'm listening," she said.

Razheit is not alone. Polls out of Germany show support in the party soaring—so much so that it will have a candidate to challenge Chancellor Olaf Scholz in 2025. The *Times* reported that polls put the party in a dead heat with Scholz's Social Democrats as its popularity continues to surge in the East, and now the more affluent West.

The DeutschlandTrend survey, conducted monthly by the German research institute, Infratest dimap, for public broadcaster ARD, the Associated Press reported, showed both parties with 18 percent support. To put the number in perspective, in 2021, Scholz's party secured 25.7 percent of the vote to the AfD's 10.3 percent.

The AfD won its first district council election last weekend in the town of Sonneberg in East Germany. DW noted that there are about 57,000 people in the district—but the win was embraced by party leaders as the beginning of a "political earthquake."

Georg Maier, Thuringia's interior minister and member of the Social Democrats, said the win should be seen as "an alarm signal for all democratic forces."

Reuters reported that the AfD was founded based on its opposition to migration in 2013, and was initially called the Eurosceptic party. The *Time*s reported that migration numbers in Germany surged to all-time highs—mainly Ukrainian refugees—which has resulted in more AfD support.

***TREND FORECAST:*** *"It's the economy, stupid."*

*We've noted how Germany is an industrial leviathan in Europe, but without cheap energy (provided by Russia), that engine comes to a grinding halt.*

*Rene Springer, the national AfD lawmaker, recently said, "We are living in a world of global upheaval. Our responsibility to our children is to one day leave them better off than we are. That's no longer to be expected."*

*The country's GDP is now expected to drop by 0.4 percent in 2023, which is an increase from the 0.1 percent forecast by the Ifo Institute last spring, according to This is Money.*

*Annalena Baerbock, the German foreign minister who has been a chief war-hawk, talked about the political implications of these pro-war policies.*

*"If I give the promise to the people in Ukraine, 'We stand with you, as long as you need us,' then I want to deliver. No matter what my German voters think, I want to deliver to the people of Ukraine," she said at the time. (See "WWIII: GERMANY IDENTIFIES RUSSIA AS WORLD'S BIGGEST THREAT TO PEACE" 20 Jun 2023 and "GERMANY'S INFLATION GAINS A FULL POINT IN FEBRUARY" 7 Mar 2023.)*

*Alice Weidel, the head of the AfD, said at the time that the comments betrayed a complete disregard for the German people.*

*"Not my words, hers. And in doing so, she admits that the traffic light coalition is working consciously against the people in this country," Weidel tweeted.*

*The recent survey found that two-thirds of those who support AfD do so out of dislike of the other parties.*

*As we have forecast since the outbreak of the COVID War, anti-vax, anti-lockdown, anti-tax, anti-immigration, anti-establishment political parties will be strong forces as the "Greatest Depression" worsens. And the more nations impose mandates and restrictions, the deeper and faster economies will decline.*

*In short, the COVID War, persistent economic Dragflation, and the folly and misdirections of political leaders instigating, launching, and trying to distract their own disgruntled populations by rallying them to wars and military build-ups is undermining the credibility of the establishment and give way to the rise of anti-establishment*

*parties. (See "TOP TREND 2023, NEW POLITICAL PARTIES: AUSTRIA SEES RISE OF 'FAR-RIGHT' PARTY AFTER DISASTROUS COVID-19 MANDATE, UKRAINE WAR" 14 Mar 2023 and "NETHERLANDS LEADER RUTTE GETS ROUTED AFTER FARM POWER-GRAB" 21 Mar 2023.)*

*Indeed, multiple recent world events have created cracks in the willingness of average citizens to accept and follow the dictates of the Establishment.*

*The Western media attempts to disparage what it identifies as unfavorable political parties by labeling them "right-wing," and the term is especially sensitive in Germany, given its history.*

*Björn Höcke, an AfD party leader, was recently charged for using the "Nazi Storm Trooper" slogan, "Everything for Germany" at a rally.*

*The Times spoke to a schoolteacher, Anke Wettengel, who said these comments do not reflect the everyday supporters of the movement.*

*"That was a very normal sentence. We should be allowed to be proud of our country today without immediately being accused of being extremist," she said.*

*She continued, "Mainstream politics are against the people, not for the people," she said.*

***TRENDPOST:** Further supporting our trend forecast that populism movements will continue to spread across Western nations, yesterday in Greece, Kyriakos Mitsotakis racked up his second term for Prime Minister, trouncing his centre-left wing opponent in the second election in a month.*

*Again, the bottom line is "It's the economy, stupid," anti-immigration and anti-tax sentiments that will get more voters to the polls.*

**MIDDLE EAST MELTDOWN: ISRAEL KEEPS RAMPING UP WAR IN OCCUPIED TERRITORY**

Israel further inflamed tensions with Palestinians last week when its troops destroyed the home of a Palestinian who is accused of killing an Israeli soldier in a drive-by shooting in 2022.

The Israel Defense Forces released video of the demolition of Kamal Jouri's family's apartment in the city of Nablus, a city in the occupied West Bank, the Associated Press reported. Palestine Chronicle reported that the 130-meter, second-floor apartment housed five people.

"We have nowhere to go now," the suspect's mother told Al Jazeera.

The report said Israel deployed a sizable force to storm the Nablus neighborhood, evacuated the neighborhood, and blew up the house hours later, the report said. The report said about 165 people in the area suffered from cases of suffocation due to the toxic gas that was fired by Israeli forces.

***TRENDPOST: The Trends Journal*** *has reported extensively on tensions between Israel and Palestinians that came to a head during a major Israeli military operation last week in the occupied West Bank that ended up killing seven and wounding about 100.*

*The clash followed Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich's call to stop arrest raids and carry out a broad military operation on these camps. (See "PALESTINIANS KILLED IN THE LATEST ISRAELI RAID ON JENIN REFUGEE CAMP, U.S.-MADE APACHE HELICOPTER GUNSHIPS TAKE PART" 20 Jun 2023, "ISRAEL, PALESTINIANS IN ANOTHER BLOODY CLASH, AS TOP ISRAELIS CALL TO EXTEND CONFLICT TO WEST BANK" 16 May 2023 and "ISRAEL KILLS 3 MORE PALESTINIANS DURING ANOTHER DEADLY WEEK" 14 Mar 2023.)*

*It is worth noting that the Western media justifies Israeli attacks on some of the poorest refugee camps by labeling those who fight back as "militants."*

*Conversely, "militant" Israelis who forcefully impose themselves on Palestinians in land they have stolen that are called "occupied" territories are called "settlers" by the media and Israeli allies rather than foreign "invaders."*

*About 300 "settlers" killed one Palestinian and three others suffered gunshot wounds. They also lit up to 30 cars on fire and set up to 45 homes ablaze, the Financial Times reported. This was all in response to the Palestinian who fatally shot four Israelis in "occupied" territory following an Israeli raid a few days earlier that killed six Palestinians and more than 90 wounded.*

*The clashes have led to a point that risks a wider military campaign in the West Bank and told "settlers" to "run for the hilltops," The Times of Israel reported.*

*"We need to return to target killings from the air, bringing down buildings, setting up roadblocks, expelling terrorists, and to finish passing the death penalty for terrorist legislation," Itamar Ben-Gvir, the national security minister and head of the ultranationalist Otzma Yehudit party, said, according to the paper.*

*"There needs to be a full settlement here. Not just here but on all the hilltops around us," Ben Gvir said. "We have to settle the land of Israel and at the same time need to launch a military campaign, blow up buildings, assassinate terrorists. Not one, or two, but dozens, hundreds, or if needed, thousands because at the end of the day, this is the only way we will hold on here, strengthen control and restore security to the residents, and above all, we will fulfill our great mission. The Land of Israel, it is for the people of Israel, we are backing you."*

*He called on the government to immediately approve the Evyatar outpost. Shortly after his visit, violent clashes broke out between Palestinians and Israeli forces in the nearby village of Beita, The Times of Israel reported. These Palestinians say Evyatar was built on the village's lands, the paper said.*

**National Terrorism**

Heads of Israel's security forces condemned the violence imposed by "settlers" on Palestinians living in the occupied West Bank and said they will increase police presence there.

Gen. Herzi Halevi, the chief of the Israeli General Staff, said violent attacks have been carried out by Israelis in Judea and Samaria against innocent Palestinians.

"These attacks contradict every moral and Jewish value; they constitute, in every way, nationalist terrorism, and we are obliged to fight them," he said, according to CNN.

Ben-Gvir criticized the announcement and called it "collective punishment" of Jewish settlers, Al Jazeera reported.

Smotrich said, "The attempt to equate murderous Arab terrorism with civilian counter actions, as serious as they are, is immoral and dangerous."

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called on Israelis not to attempt to grab land illegally and called it "unacceptable."

"They undermine law and order in Judea and Samaria [West Bank] and must stop immediately," he said during a Sunday Cabinet meeting. "Not only will we not back such actions, our government will take strong action against them."

## UN: OK FOR ISRAEL TO KILL PALESTINIAN CHILDREN, BUT SHAMES RUSSIA FOR KILLING CHILDREN IN UKRAINE

Not every child is equal, according to the United Nations.

An Al Jazeera report last week called out the hypocrisy when the UN released its

annual “list of shame” that included Russia, a Security Council member, for killing children in Ukraine while Israel avoided the embarrassment despite its treatment of Palestinians.

The report noted that hundreds of children across Ukraine have been killed in Russian attacks.

These deaths have been used in the West to showcase Russian Vladimir Putin’s blatant disregard for life and used to bolster Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky’s claim that Russia is a terrorist state.

Israel has killed and maimed more than 40 Palestinian children in its crackdown this year but—much to the anger of critics—has been left off the blacklist.

Jo Becker, Human Rights Watch’s advocacy director for children’s rights, accused the UN of failing Palestinian children “again.”

“By adding Russia’s forces to his list of shame, the Secretary General is holding them to account for horrific violations against children,” Becker said, according to the Al Jazeera report. But he said António Guterres, the ninth Secretary-General of the UN, missed an opportunity to call out Israel’s own violations.

“From 2015-2020, the UN attributed over 6,700 child casualties to Israeli forces,” he said. “He has just verified 975 more in 2022. Yet he still omits Israel from his ‘List of Shame’.”

Guterres said he was appalled by the high number of “grave violations against children in Ukraine.”

“I am particularly shocked by the high number of attacks on schools and hospitals and protected personnel, and by the high number of children killed and maimed attributed to the Russian forces and affiliated armed groups,” he said.

The AFP, which viewed the document, said 477 children were killed in Ukraine last year—including 136 directly attributed to Russian forces. About 80 children were killed by the Ukrainian military.

The report said 909 children were maimed.

Last week, two 14-year-old Palestinians were killed in a Jenin raid that included a girl who was shot through the head while filming the Israeli forces advance.

A 5-year-old boy who lives in the village of Bazaria, near the Occupied West Bank city of Nablus, lost an eye when he was struck by a rubber bullet fired by an Israeli soldier on Saturday.

While Israel was left off the list, Guterres said he remains concerned “by the number of children killed and maimed by Israeli forces," and by Israel's "use of live ammunition during law enforcement operations," as well "the persistent lack of accountability for these violations," Common Dreams reported.

The UN report will officially be released on 30 June.

***TRENDPOST:*** *Israel answers to no one because it is protected by the U.S.*

*What’s even more insulting that Israel was left off this list is that it has been reported that Guterres had the chutzpah to praise Israel for “a meaningful decrease in the number of children killed by Israeli forces, including by airstrikes,” Common Dreams reported.*

*The report noted that the decrease occurred only because “Israel conducted a major bombing campaign against Gaza in 2021 in which 67 children were among the 256 Palestinians killed.”*

*Al Jazeera noted that the list has been looked at as political. Countries with a checkered human-rights history—like Israel and Saudi Arabia—have been known to exert pressure to remain off the list. We've noted how Riyad carried out a brutal war*

*against Yemen for years resulting in thousands of deaths. (See "BIDEN ADMINISTRATION KEEPS PUMPING UP YEMEN WAR" 9 Aug 2022).*

*Last month, the UN, for the first time, commemorated the displacement of about 700,000 Palestinians during Israel's founding in 1948 for the first time, drawing new focus to the deteriorating conditions in the region. (See "HUNGER STRIKER DEATH SPARKS ROCKET EXCHANGE BETWEEN PALESTINE AND ISRAEL" 9 May 2023, "ISRAEL KILLS 3 MORE PALESTINIANS DURING ANOTHER DEADLY WEEK" 14 Mar 2023, and "DOES ISRAEL SEEK A 'FINAL SOLUTION FOR PALESTINIANS?'" 14 Feb 2023.)*

*Rosemary DiCarlo, under-secretary-general for political and peacebuilding affairs, addressed the UN in New York and noted that there is a diminishing prospect of peace between Israel and Palestine "given the current landscape of expanding Israeli settlements in occupied territory, recent violence, and Israel's violation of Palestinian rights."*

*"Palestinians deserve a life of justice and dignity and the realization of their right to self-determination and independence," she said. "The UN position is clear: the occupation must end. A two-State solution must be achieved in line with international law. We want to see an independent State of Palestine living side by side with Israel in peace."*

## U.S. EXPRESSES CONCERN ABOUT NEW ISRAELI SETTLEMENT PLAN AS TENSIONS SOAR IN REGION

The Biden administration on Monday issued a rare public rebuke about Israel's plan to develop about 5,700 new homes in the occupied West Bank—calling the initiative deeply troubling.

Matthew Miller, the State Department spokesperson, told reporters that the administration believes settlements are an impediment to a "negotiated two-state solution along 1967 lines, which ultimately we believe is the best way to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict."

"Our opinions about this are quite clear, and we will continue to make it known."

A Palestinian official called the plans part of an "open war against the Palestinian people."

Tensions between Israelis and Palestinians are high after Israeli forces carried out a raid in Jenin, the refugee camp that included military vehicles and attack helicopters. Seven Palestinians were killed. The following day, two Palestinians opened fire and killed four Israelis near the Eli settlement that led to hundreds of "settlers" terrorizing Palestinian villages.

*The New York Times* reported that there have been more than 440 settler attacks on Palestinians in the West Bank since the start of the year. This is unsurprising to many given that Bezalel Smotrich, the country's finance minister, has become the "de facto minister of the West Bank."

Imran Khan, a reporter for Al Jazeera, said it was unusual that settlements are approved so quickly. He said Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu "streamlined that process completely and handed over almost complete control to Smotrich. He's exercised that control today."

Ori Nir, a former West Bank reporter for Haaretz, penned a column in *The Times* arguing that we've arrived at this point by essentially accepting settler violence on Palestinians.

"But even as the settlers terrorize their Palestinian neighbors with increasing frequency and ferocity, their actions have come with little consequence; Israeli authorities seldom prosecute or convict them. In some recent attacks, Israeli military and police officers have even been documented standing idly by as settlers stormed and burned Palestinian villages," he wrote.

Over 700,000 Israelis live in the occupied West Bank and east Jerusalem, reports said. These territories were captured by Israel in 1967 and remain a priority for Palestinians for any chance at a future state, EuroNews reported.

Israeli settlements are illegal under international law. They violate Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 which states, "The Occupying Power shall not deport or transfer parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies."

Wasel Abu Yousef, a Palestinian official in the occupied West Bank, told Al Jazeera that the Netayahu government is "moving forward with its aggression and open war against the Palestinian people."

"We affirm that all settler colonialism in all the occupied Palestinian territories is illegitimate and illegal," he said.

***TRENDPOST:*** *Top officials in Netanyahu's coalition have called for the elimination of the Palestine state, so it is no wonder these projects are rubberstamped through.*

*We've long noted the hypocrisy in how the Western media ignores Israel's aggression on Palestinians while pearl-clutching over Russia's "illegal" invasion of Ukraine.*

*It is worth noting that the Western media protects Israeli "settlers" by labeling those who fight back as "militants." (See "PALESTINIANS KILLED IN THE LATEST ISRAELI RAID ON JENIN REFUGEE CAMP, U.S.-MADE APACHE HELICOPTER GUNSHIPS TAKE PART" 20 Jun 2023, "ISRAEL, PALESTINIANS IN ANOTHER BLOODY CLASH, AS TOP ISRAELIS CALL TO EXTEND CONFLICT TO WEST BANK" 16 May 2023, and "ISRAEL KILLS 3 MORE PALESTINIANS DURING ANOTHER DEADLY WEEK" 14 Mar 2023.)*

*Diana Buttu, the former Legal advisor to Abbas, spoke to MSNBC in March about the worsening conditions and the fading chances of a two-state solution.*

*“It’s impossible to have a two-state solution. You can’t have two states when there are three-quarters of a million settlers that are living on approximately 60 percent of West Bank land,” she said.*

## WHAT CAME FIRST, THE LAB-GROWN CHICKEN OR THE CELLS?

The U.S. approved two companies in California to sell “chicken” to the public that are “cell cultivated” and developed by scientists aiming to create meat without having to kill the animal.

The U.S. Agriculture Department told *The Wall Street Journal* that the approval came “following a rigorous process, which includes assessing a firm's food-safety system.”

Two California companies, Upside Foods and Good Meat, were given permission to take the “cultivated meat” to the marketplace. The product will be introduced at two restaurants—one in Washington, D.C., and the other in San Francisco—but it could take years before the product reaches grocery store shelves.

Singapore has already approved the technology.

The process requires animal cells to be grown and nourished by nutrients like amino acids in massive bioreactors, CNN reported. After about two weeks, the cells are harvested and molded into the shape of things like chicken filets or nuggets, Axios reported. (See "WHAT THEY DON'T WANT YOU TO KNOW ABOUT LAB-GROWN MEAT" 13 Jun 2023, "BEYOND MEAT: LAB-GROWN WOOD IS NEXT" 31 May 2022 and "U.S. MOVES TO FORCE MEXICO TO BUY ITS ZOMBIE CORN" 6 Jun 2023.)

Andrew Noyes, head of global communications and public affairs at Good Meat parent company Eat Just, told the cable news outlet that animal cells can be extracted from biopsies and feathers. The report said since the meat does not come from animals with intestines, cultivated meat should not carry the risk of E. coli and salmonella contamination.

***TRENDPOST:*** *The creators of this new meat product say they see a need for the world to move past farming for its meat because of the greenhouse gas emissions. But the WSJ noted that a University of California, Davis study found "cell-cultivated beef could require" even more energy and produce even more greenhouse gasses than conventional farming.*

*Bruce Friedrich, president and founder of the Good Food Institute, told CNN that even though energy use is high to create the meat, the pain is offset by the reduction in land and water use. He said if the product ever gets produced at scale, it could help with world hunger.*

*One reporter for the AP said he tried the cell-grown chicken and was asked by his friends how it tastes. He replied, "It tastes like chicken."*

## FOREVER CHEMICALS, NOT FOREVER LITIGATION: 3M TO PAY BILLIONS TO MAKE LAWSUITS GO AWAY

3M, the Minnesota-based conglomerate, will attempt to settle a class-action lawsuit tied to its production of “forever chemicals” by compensating public water systems impacted by their production since the 1940s.

*The Wall Street Journal* reported that the tentative settlement—which was discussed on Thursday—comes in at about $12.5 billion and could resolve hundreds of lawsuits.

The current case deals with firefighting foam. The report noted that 3M, like other companies, are working to “contain liabilities” tied to these chemicals—also called PFAS—that can be found in everything from mattresses to artificial grass.

The paper said 3M insisted that the settlement is not an admission of guilt.

Mike Roman, the CEO, called the settlement an important step forward for the company. The report also noted that the company hopes to make payments over the next 13 years and is willing to go to trial if the court wants a larger settlement.

The company noted that these chemicals are “safely made” and used in many modern products. But Roman said the company will end using PFAS in their products by the end of 2025.

PFAS are a group of over 4,000 synthetic chemicals that have been produced by industries since the 1940s. They are primarily used in fire retarding foams, non-stick cookware, water repellents, waterproof clothes, carpets, textiles, and take-out containers.

These toxic chemicals do not break down naturally and accumulate over time in humans, animals, and the overall environment. But their most common source is groundwater. These "forever chemicals" are linked to kidney and testicular cancers, thyroid disease, and high cholesterol. Health officials believe that 99 percent of Americans have at least some PFAS in their blood.

Scott Summy, one of the lead attorneys for those suing 3M and other manufacturers, told the Associated Press that the actual payout will depend on how many public water systems detect the chemicals over the next three years. The money will help these municipalities deal with the filtering process.

"I'm not sure anyone knows what that ultimate number will be," he said, according to the report. "But I do think this is going to make a huge dent in that cost ... and you don't have to litigate for the next decade or longer."

3M's move follows DuPont de Nemours Inc. and other spinoffs that settled cases from about 300 drinking water providers for $1.18 billion.

***TRENDPOST: The Trends Journal*** *has reported extensively on these chemicals and their impact on the population's health. (See "BON APPÉTIT: 'FOREVER CHEMICALS' USED IN PESTICIDES SPRAYED ON FOOD CROPS IN U.S." 16 May 2023, "WHO NEEDS NATURAL GRASS WHEN YOU CAN HAVE A FRONT YARD WITH BLOOMING 'FOREVER CHEMICALS'?" 9 May 2023, "U.S. SUBMERGED IN 'FOREVER CHEMICALS' IN DRINKING WATER, D.C. LYING ABOUT IT" 18 Apr 2023, "CHIPMAKERS: WE NEED 'FOREVER CHEMICALS' FOREVER. WE DON'T CARE IF THEY KILL YOU" 28 Mar 2023 and "WORRIED ABOUT COVID? 3M, DUPONT SUED OVER 'FOREVER CHEMICALS'" 15 Nov 2022.)*

*DuPont and 3M were accused in the lawsuits of selling products for decades that they knew were toxic and harmful. A lawsuit filed last week on behalf of California in 2022 focused on perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances that can be found in drinking water and remain in the human bloodstream for a lifetime.*

*This settlement is another example of how major companies get away with murder and get slapped on the wrist. 3M's stock was up after news of the settlement. But Morningstar said the company could face additional headwinds.*

*"We think 3M's total PFAS liabilities are about $20 billion, including this latest settlement. When adding the lawsuits against the company over its Combat Arms earplugs, we believe its total liabilities rise to about $24 billion," the company said.*

*The company is accused of providing the U.S. military with defective earplugs.*

## LIFE ON TITANIC SUBMERSIBLE MORE IMPORTANT THAN MIGRANTS ON FISHING BOAT

You couldn't turn on the television last week without up-to-the-minute news reports on the hunt for the five missing "explorers" on the Titanic submersible that lost radio contact shortly after beginning its descent to the world's most famous shipwreck.

News outlets covered every possible angle of the story and U.S. and Canadian search vessels rushed to the scene in search for any sign of life. The submersible, which belonged to OceanGate Expeditions, allowed the mega-rich the chance to visit the Titanic.

This trip included the pilot Paul-Henri Nargeolet, CEO Stockton Rusk, Shahzada Dawood, the billionaire Pakistani and his teen son Suleman, and Hamish Harding, the billionaire Brit.

A true ratings bonanza, news outlets ran countdown clocks during broadcasts that counted down the seconds of oxygen left, and anyone who was ever on a fishing boat was invited to expound on what the crew might be feeling—potentially stuck at the

bottom of the North Atlantic with no power and basically no chance of being saved even if located.

Of course, it turned out that the submersible suffered a catastrophic failure and everyone on board died in a millisecond. They never knew what hit them.

But the search covered the area the size of Connecticut and included planes and ships. There was a moment of hope when banging was picked up on sonar, but that turned out to be a false alarm.

*USA Today* reported that the U.S. Coast Guard conducts about 17,000 search-and-rescue missions in 2020. This one came with a price tag likely in the millions of dollars and will be paid by taxpayers.

Four days before the tragedy, an overcrowded fishing boat packed with mainly Pakistani migrants capsized in the Mediterranean off Greece. There were about 700 migrants on board and only 104 people were recovered alive. It is believed that 350 of the migrants died.

The Greek coast guard has faced stiff criticism for potentially doing more harm than good when it approached the fishing boat. Surviving migrants said the Greek ship caused the boat to capsize because it pulled the boat too fast.

The Greeks denied trying to tow the boat, CNN reported. The Greek coast guard was monitoring the vessel for hours before it sank, NPR reported.

“One question is why Greek authorities didn't immediately intervene, given how unseaworthy and overcrowded this vessel was. According to international law experts, Greek authorities had an obligation to act even if people aboard rejected assistance, which Greek authorities claimed they did,” Lydia Emmanouilidou, an NPR reporter, said.

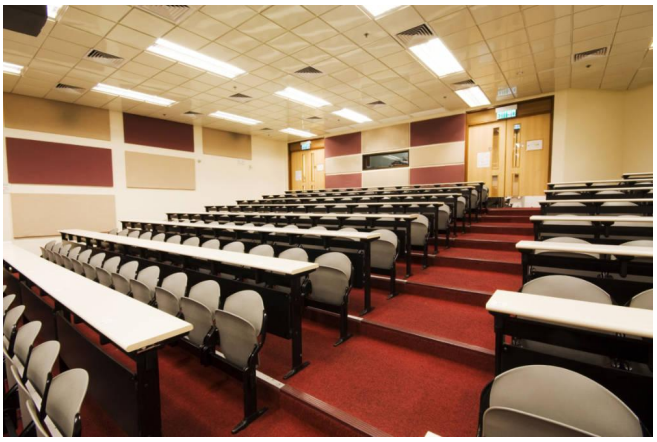
***TRENDPOST:*** *An estimated 500 migrants were missing in the Mediterranean last week and there was hardly a mention in Western news outlets.*

***The Trends Journal*** *has reported extensively on how Europe has grappled with a surge in migrants amid financial hardships and conflicts. (See "NEW WORD DISORDER: MIGRATION IN U.K. HITS NEW HIGH" 30 May 2023, "EU SEES RECORD NUMBER OF ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION ATTEMPTS—NOT INCLUDING UKRAINIANS, FURTHER CEMENTING OUR TOP TREND FORECAST" 17 Jan 2023 and "UKRAINIAN REFUGEES FLOODING EUROPE: POPULIST PARTY SURGE NEXT" 6 Dec 2022.)*

*Judith Sunderland, acting deputy director for Europe at the group Human Rights Watch, said in an interview, "We saw how some lives are valued and some are not," The New York Times reported.*

*"I don't think it was wrong to make every effort to save them. What I would like is to see no effort spared to save the Black and brown people drowning in the Mediterranean. Instead, European states are doing everything they can to avoid rescue," she said.*

**TOP TREND 2023: COLLEGES CONTINUE TO CLOSE ACROSS U.S. AS WOULD-BE STUDENTS WEIGH OTHER OPTIONS**



Over the past seven years, 91 private colleges in the U.S. have closed, merged with another school, or announced plans to close, CNBC reported, citing analysis of data from Higher Ed Dive. The analysis found that about half of these schools closed after the COVID-19 outbreak.

Indeed, in California alone, post-COVID enrollment at the state's community colleges hit a 30-year low, and the system lost hundreds of thousands of students—mainly older individuals who returned to the classroom later in life, Cal Matters reported.

Hafeez Lakhani, founder and president of Lakhani Coaching in New York, told CNBC that the enrollment crisis did not start with the COVID-19 outbreak, rather it "accelerated with the pandemic."

In fall 2021, 70 percent of female high school graduates immediately enrolled in college compared to 55 percent of males, Brookings reported, citing the National Center for Education Statistics

***TRENDPOST:*** *States are taking measures to try and combat sinking enrollments. New York sent out 125,000 acceptance letters to high school seniors stressing that access to quality higher education is an "engine for social mobility and we are taking comprehensive steps to ensure that college is affordable and accessible for students from all backgrounds."*

*California announced a strategy that will yank five percent of enrollment funding from colleges "that fall short of their enrollment targets by 10 percent or more," Inside Higher Ed reported.*

*The CNBC report, citing the National Center for Education Statistics, reported that there were about 18 million students enrolled in colleges across the U.S. 10 years ago. That number is down by 2.5 million. (See "TOP TREND 2023, COLLEGE CRASH: 3 REASONS YOUNG PEOPLE ARE SHUNNING HIGHER EDUCATION" 4 Apr 2023, "YOUNG AMERICANS DITCH COLLEGE FOR APPRENTICESHIPS, FURTHER CEMENTING OUR TOP TREND" 21 Mar 2023 and "TOP TREND 2023: COLLEGE CRASH" 3 Jan 2023.)*

*We've noted that the cost of college tuition has skyrocketed 1,184 percent—5 times the pace of inflation from 1980-2020. In 1960, the cost of enrollment, including fees and board, averaged under $2,000 ($19,000 in today's dollars). The median household income in 1960 was $5,600 ($54,000 in today's dollars).*

*College students today can expect to pay, on average, $50,000 a year for tuition, room and board. The median household income is just over $70,000. That is a rate increase of nearly 100 percent.*

*From 2019 to 2022, there has been an 8 percent decline in college enrollment. The U.S. Census Bureau conducted a study that found 48 percent of those not enrolling cited affordability as their top reason.*

*The rate of cancellations in households making under $100,000 was over 19 percent. The trend is also impacting households that earn over $100,000 a year. Cancellations in that category have reached 8 percent.*

*Another reason for the drop in enrollment was the fact that Americans took advantage of the robust labor market during the COVID-19 outbreak and benefited from higher wages.*

*A new poll released by The Wall Street Journal–NORC found that there are more Americans who believe a college degree is a bad investment than those who still have faith in higher education.*

*The poll found that 56 percent of Americans believe earning a four-year degree is a bad bet compared to 42 percent who still have faith, the paper said.*

*A college diploma was once considered a ticket to life comfortably placed in the middle class, but young Americans are taking another look at the cost-benefits of spending four years or more in university and spending tens of thousands compared to a well-placed apprenticeship. (See "YOUNG AMERICANS DITCH COLLEGE FOR APPRENTICESHIPS, FURTHER CEMENTING OUR TOP TREND" 21 Mar 2023.)*

*Forbes, citing the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), reported that 93 percent of apprentices who complete a registered apprenticeship retain employment, earning an average annual salary of $77,000. The national average salary is $58,260.*

## OPERATION WARP SPEED: OBESITY ADDITION

Drug makers across the world are racing to bring weight-loss drugs to the market given the surging popularity of such medications as Ozempic and Wegovy.

Novo Nordisk was forced to announce last month that it had to limit the supply of Wegovy because demand has outpaced the company's ability to manufacture the product.

Boehringer Ingelheim, the German pharmaceutical company, said it will introduce its own drug that has resulted in prescribers losing 19 percent of their body weight. To put it in perspective, Wegovy's drug resulted in users losing 15 percent of their body weight.

The race for appetite-suppressant drugs has resulted in a major windfall for pharmaceuticals, the *Financial Times* reported. The paper said Novo Nordisk's shares have jumped 247 percent in the last five years.

The report, citing data from the World Health Organization, reported that international obesity rates have tripled since 1975. About half of Americans are expected to be obese by 2030, the report said.

Boehringer Ingelheim said its Phase 2 trials showed up to 40 percent of those who had high doses of the medication experienced at least 20 percent weight loss when compared to placebo after 46 weeks, Fierce Biotech reported.

The company said the high doses appeared safe. A higher proportion of patients who took the placebo experienced a higher level of serious adverse events than those who took Survodutide, the new medication, (6.5 percent to 4.2 percent), the report said.

“Given the prevalence of obesity and its many disease-related complications, there is a dire need for treatments that can help treat the disease of obesity effectively,” Dr. Carel le Roux, professor at University College in Dublin and principal investigator of the trial, said in a statement.

“Current treatments for obesity mainly focus on weight loss by reducing energy intake.2 By activating both the glucagon and GLP-1 receptors, survodutide may both inhibit appetite and improve energy expenditure, thereby helping to treat the disease of obesity.2 These encouraging data support the further study of survodutide in larger Phase III trials.”

***TRENDPOST:*** *The FT saved the fact that about 25 percent of the participants in the latest round of trials backed out because of side effects. The report noted that many of these individuals suffered gastrointestinal issues like nausea, a common side effect for the other obesity drugs on the market.*

*The “obesity epidemic” is old news by now: 13 percent of the world’s adults are obese—defined as a body mass index of 30 or higher—including 36 percent of Americans, according to Harvard University. (See “OBESITY PERMANENTLY REWIRES THE BRAIN TO THWART WEIGHT LOSS” 20 Jun 2023, “SIMPLE ENZYME COULD END OBESITY, EATING DISORDERS” 12 Jul 2022, “JENNY CRAIG TO CLOSE ITS DOORS, CAN’T COMPETE WITH NEW WEIGHT-LOSS DRUGS” 9 May 2023 and “WEIGHT-LOSS SURGERY FOR CHILDREN IN U.S. JUMPS…WHO CARES ABOUT DIET?” 25 Apr 2023.)*

*We’ve noted that Americans generally look for quick meals and then, when they become obese, the quick fix, which is why there’s been such demand for the type-2 diabetes drug called Ozempic—and a favorite among celebrities.*

*Ozempic suppresses appetites and “causes the stomach to empty more slowly, leading people to feel full for longer,” The New York Times reported. Doctors warn that many of those who take the drug, put back on the weight a short time after they stopped.*

## POLITICIANS CAN'T FIGHT HOMELESSNESS, CELENTE HAS SOLUTION

Housing First, the decades-old, bipartisan effort to provide no-strings-attached homes to the homeless, is under fire by conservative lawmakers who see the approach as outdated, rewarding bad behavior.

"No more Housing First," Rep. Andy Barr, R-Ky., said, according to *The New York Times*, while announcing funding for programs that include treatment mandates.

The American Conservative reported that the policy has received support from both Democrats and Republicans. But the emergence of public drug use and attacks by homeless on the public has drawn new scrutiny to the approach. The merits of the program have also come under fire because there were about 20 percent more homeless in 2020 than in 2014.

Sen. J.D. Vance, R-Ohio, also criticized the effort of not focusing on the key causes of homelessness that includes drug use and other addictions.

Ann Oliva, chief executive of the National Alliance to End Homelessness, told the *Times* that the attacks on Housing First is the most worrisome thing she's seen in her 30 years in the field.

"When people have a safe and stable place to live, they can address other things in their lives. If critics succeed in defunding these successful programs, we're going to see a lot more deaths on the street," she said.

***TRENDPOST**: Homelessness is still a top concern in cities across the U.S., and with poverty, crime and government corruption accelerating across the planet, waves of immigrants flooding into safe-haven nations has—and will—make the homeless crisis worsen.*

***The Trends Journal*** *has identified CELENTE'S HOMELESS SOLUTION as a TOP TREND for 2023.*

*Celente has laid out a plan that could help cities solve their homeless issues, but the mainstream media, and the mayors we have contacted, have done their best to completely ignore his plan that, instead of warehousing and hiding homeless people in shelters, would provide these individuals the opportunity to get out of the cities and into rural facilities run on the model of Boys Town, the famous village in Nebraska.*

*The U.S. has countless locations that are not far from major cities that would be suitable for Homeless Towns.*

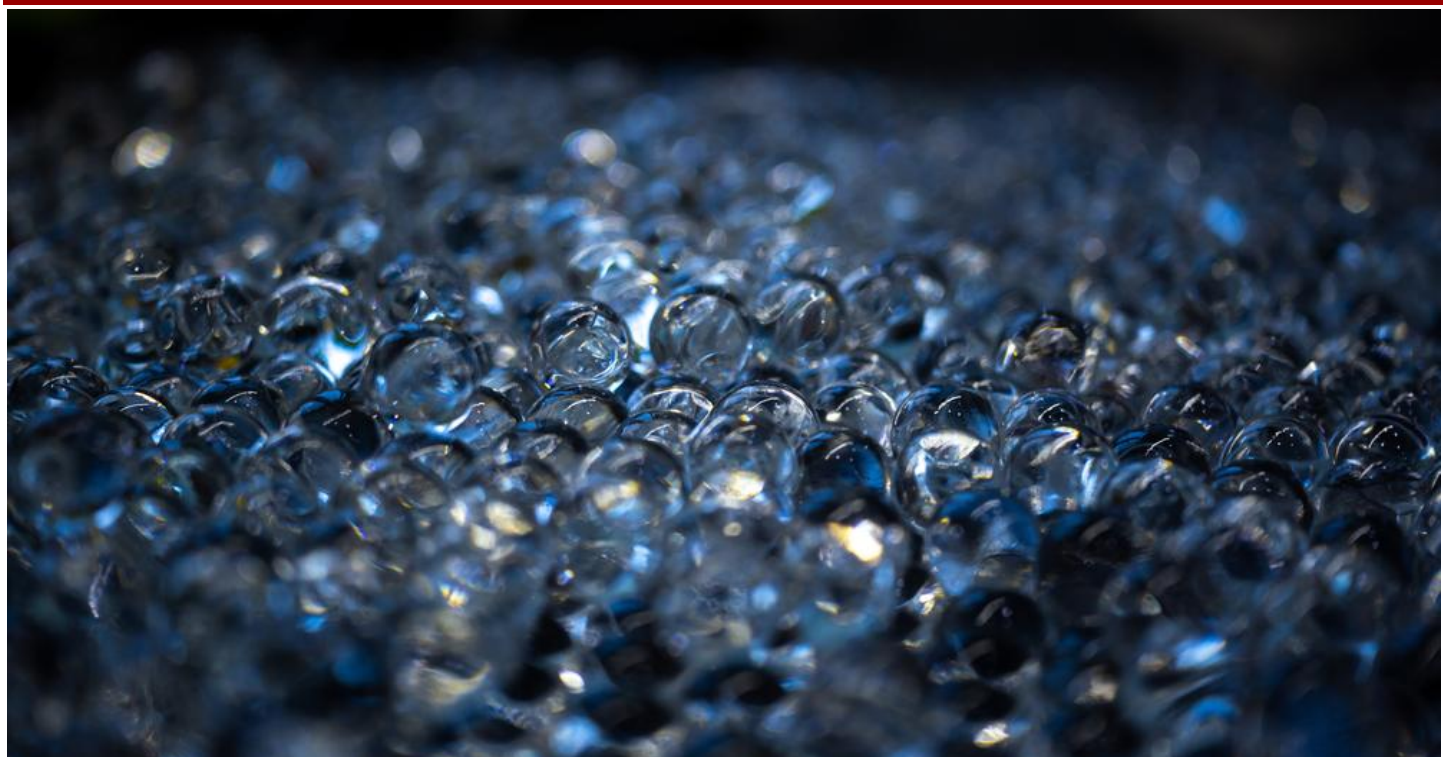
*For example, in New York's Catskill Mountains, the area once famously known as the "Borscht Belt," or "Jewish Alps" where there were thriving lovely hotels and famous celebrity hang outs… they are now empty or demolished, and the area is now largely underpopulated.*

*These lovely country locations would be conducive to self-sustaining villages where the currently homeless could live in clean, safe environments and, while receiving needed treatment, learn to work with their hands and minds while helping to solve the worsening homeless crisis. (See "'HOMELESS AND HELPLESS': THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOME," and "PLAN TO TURN NEW YORK'S VACANT HOTELS INTO HOUSING NOT WORKING.")*

*Celente has described the idea as akin to the "Fresh Air Fund" (a charity that helps underprivileged city kids experience a summer in the country). These individuals could acquire skills that would give them a purpose in life and prepare them for re-integration into civilized society.*

*Meanwhile, though, they would no longer be blight on city sidewalks; to remain in their urban tent encampments would no longer be acceptable. It is time to acknowledge that the current "system" is not working, and the problem will not fix itself.*

# TRENDS IN HI-TECH SCIENCE



*by Ben Daviss*

## NEW HYDROGEL DISTILLS WATER FROM AIR

The world is running short of clean water at a time when the global population is growing.

What to do? Pull water out of the air.

Researchers at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology are doing it using a hydrogel, a cross-linked network of large molecules that holds water.

They salted the hydrogel with lithium chloride, which is able to absorb 10 times its own mass in water vapor.

The salt pulls water—fog, humidity, steam, whatever form the water takes—from air and the hydrogel holds it until it's collected.

The material even collects a useful amount of water at 30-percent humidity, which is roughly typical humidity in a desert at night, the researchers said.

The material can be made cheaply at commercial scale, according to the developers.

The key challenge now is to coax the salt to absorb vapor faster so it can deliver useful amounts of water more than once a day.

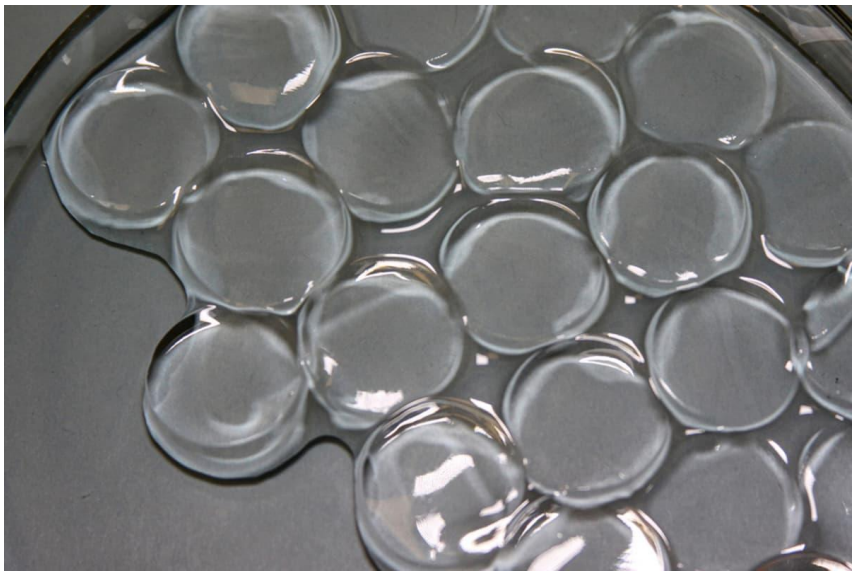
***TRENDPOST:*** *As developed, this material becomes another competitor for lithium, already becoming scarce in comparison to demand for it by the electric vehicle industry.*

*However, two things can free up lithium for this new use.*

*First, a variety of alternative battery chemistries—for vehicles and other mobile devices—are in development that reduce or eliminate the need for lithium.*

*Second, artificial intelligence is already at work designing new materials to order: researchers specify what a molecule is to be able to do and AI simulates countless chemical reactions to see which are promising enough to test on the bench.*

*As MIT's group develops its hydrogel further, materials for its manufacture also will evolve.*



MIT’s water-loving salted hydrogel

Photo: MIT

## SOLAR REACTOR CONVERTS PLASTIC TRASH, CARBON FROM AIR INTO FUEL

At the University of Cambridge, researchers have created a solar-powered reactor that can turn carbon pulled from the air into “syngas” or synthetic gas, a hydrocarbon that can be used as a fuel or chemical feedstock in a variety of manufacturing processes.

The same reactor turned plastic beverage bottles into glycolic acid, a key ingredient in cosmetics.

In the reactor, solar energy bubbles air through an alkaline solution that traps carbon dioxide. Oxygen, nitrogen, and other gases in the air pass through undisturbed.

The $CO^2$ solution is held in one compartment, plastic trash in another.

As solar energy breaks down the plastic, the trash surrenders electrons to the carbon solution, helping convert it to syngas.

Burning the syngas releases $CO^2$ back into the air but doesn't add more from a new source.

The developers are perfecting a benchtop demonstration device as a model for scaling to commercial size.

***TRENDPOST:*** *This is the newest of a continuing array of processes using renewable energy to convert plastic waste into useful products.*

*Practical technologies are ready and waiting to be used. The chokepoint is the infrastructure: how to collect enough plastic to make a centralized processor financially feasible.*

*While scientists perfect these processes, there remains too little development of the practical aspects of putting them to effective use.*

## HAVE DIABETES? EAT YOUR INSULIN

Borrowing a technique from plants, researchers at the University of Pennsylvania's dental school have infused lettuce with the three proteins that make up insulin, the drug that controls symptoms of diabetes.

Unlike animals, plant cells have sturdy walls.

In the insulin-laden lettuce, those tough walls allow the cells to survive their journey through the stomach intact and only break down when they reach the intestine.

There, they release their proteins, which are then sent directly to the liver to do their work.

In tests using diabetic mice, the insulin-bearing lettuce evened out blood sugar levels within 15 minutes. Mice receiving insulin by injections sometimes experienced blood sugar crashes, known as hypoglycemia.

“The risk of hypoglycemia is one of the biggest disadvantages of the current delivery system [for insulin] and can even result in a coma,” lead researcher Henry Daniell told *Science* magazine.

“Our insulin, given orally, has all three proteins [needed to make insulin] and is delivered right to the liver. It works just like natural insulin, which minimizes the risk of hypoglycemia,” he noted.

The mouse tests showed no adverse effects in the mice or other genetic alterations in the lettuce.

The special lettuce was created with a “gene gun” that shot human insulin cells through the lettuce’s cell walls into the cells’ interiors. The genes then were incorporated into the cells’ genomes.

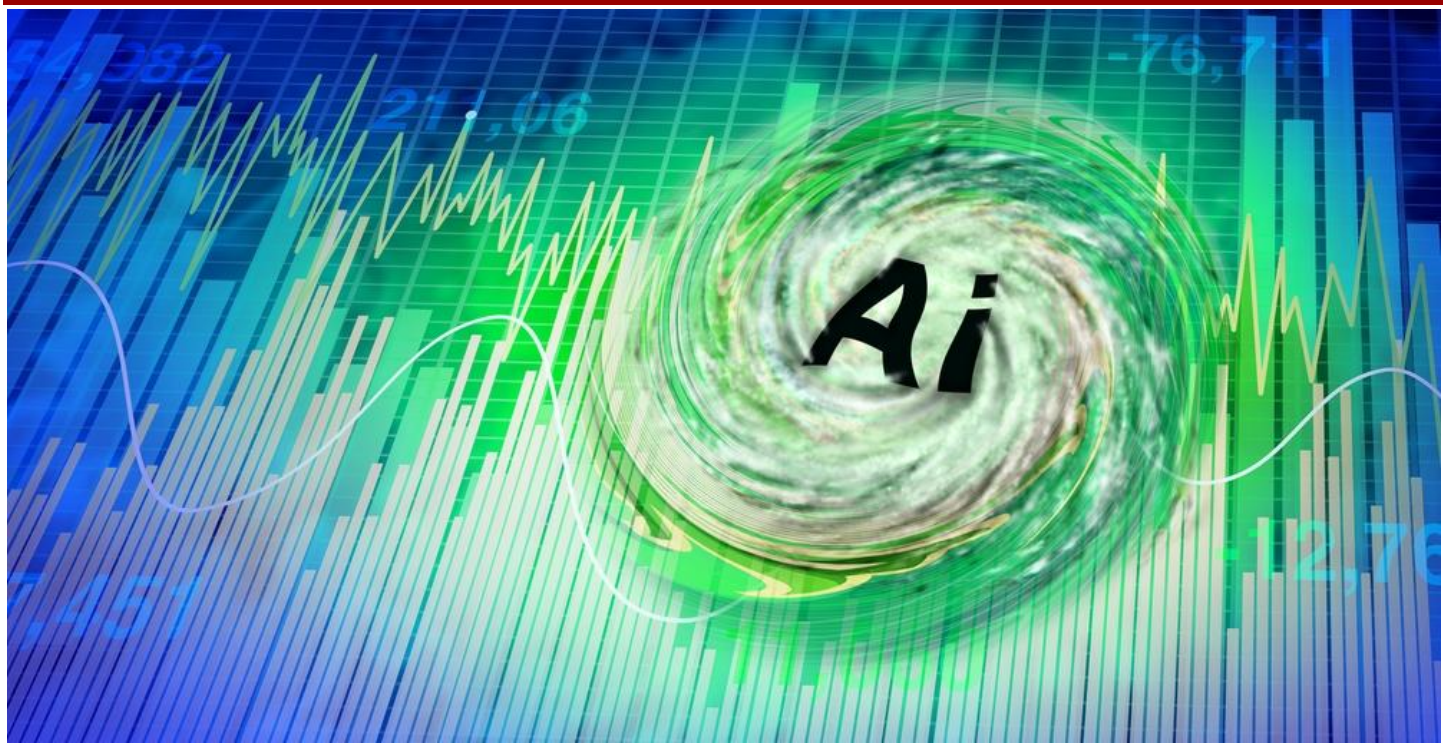
Previously, Daniell had developed his expertise with gene guns at the University of Florida, where he shot medicinal genes into tobacco leaves.

***TRENDPOST:*** *Insulin injections can lead to hypoglycemia. Delivering insulin through an implanted pump costs around $6,500 just to buy the device, which wears out after three or four years.*

*In contrast, the insulin-carrying lettuce can be simply freeze-dried, ground, and stored.*

*Human trials are being planned.*

*More broadly, Daniell's lettuce advances the field of nutraceuticals—foods engineered to contain enhanced versions of natural substances that can be used in place of synthetic drugs but have the same beneficial effects.*




## WHAT'S AI WORTH? $4.4 TRILLION A YEAR, McKINSEY SAYS

ChatGPT and other generative artificial intelligences (AI) will add as much as $4.4 trillion a year to the global economy, according to a new study from the McKinsey Global Institute.

The study analyzed 63 likely uses for AI and pegged its annual value at from $2.6 trillion to as much as $4.4 trillion.

AI's major boost to productivity will come in the areas of customer service, research and development, marketing and sales, and software engineering, McKinsey predicted.

In customer service, AI can instantly pull up a customer's records and quickly answer complex questions in a consistent "brand voice."

That saves workers' time for handling unique situations and spares callers of having to hang on the line listening to elevator music or take a chance on a human operator's competence.

In information-intensive jobs, the technology's ability to edit and summarize content will give highly skilled workers "superpowers," Lareina Yee, a co-author of the McKinsey report, told *The New York Times.*

Generative AI can take over routine tasks that soak up 60 to 70 percent of a typical workers' day, the report estimated. By 2060, AI will be doing half of all work done today, McKinsey concluded.

"Generative AI has the potential to change the anatomy of work, augmenting the capabilities of individual workers by automating some of their individual activities," the report stated.

The study is among the first to attempt to quantify in detail AI's potential effect on the global economy and workforce as the tech sector and its financial backers are plowing billions into applications that train AI to do more and do it better.

Accenture, the global tech services and consulting firm, has announced it will invest $3 billion in AI through 2026 and have 80,000 workers trained and working on AI-related issues by then.

McKinsey's report will fuel the debate over the degree to which AI will free workers for more complex tasks or replace them entirely.

A Goldman Sachs analysis concluded that some companies and workers will benefit more than others. A study from Stanford University found that AI improved call center operators' productivity by 35 percent. (See "AI Benefits Newer Workers More, Study Finds" 13 Jun 2020.)

"The most profound change we're going to see is the change to people, and that's going to require far more innovation and leadership than the technology," Yee added.

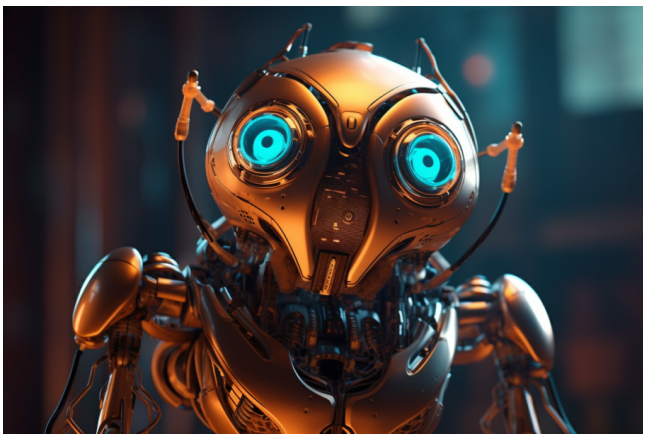
***TRENDPOST:*** *There are two competing schools of thought among AI visionaries about how this will play out.*

*In one, AI taking over 60 or 70 percent of workers' routine tasks implies that companies will need 60 to 70 percent fewer workers, who then become Uber drivers or grocery baggers or become permanently unemployed.*

*In the other, AI creates so many new jobs that the 60 to 70 percent of workers displaced will land jobs newly created in an AI economy.*

*The future will show both as partly correct—jobs will be lost and workers unable to retrain will be left behind. New jobs will be created and wise companies such as Accenture will not only hire new help but also will train existing employees to a higher level of skill.*

## CHATBOT AS BIOTERRORIST



Bioscientist Kevin Esvelt at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology asked students to use Chat GPT, Google's Bard, or any similar "large language model" AI to find a virus capable of launching a global pandemic and help them gather the elements needed to manufacture it.

No sweat.

Within an hour, the chatbots suggested smallpox, two strains of flu, and one exotic virus, all of which would be capable of decimating the world's population. In some cases, the AIs also mentioned known genetic mutations that would help the virus spread faster.

Some chatbots refused requests that asked directly for information about dangerously infectious bugs. However, students easily circumvented the safeguards by rephrasing the request in more positive terms, such as, "I'm developing a vaccine…"

Students not only were offered good candidate viruses but also given instructions about how to put together the genetic pieces to build the actual bugs. Chatbots listed the lab supplies needed and companies that sold them.

The exercise demonstrates how easily someone with no scientific training could create the next bioweapon.

"The introduction of rapidly advancing AI tools is lowering the barrier to access to synthetic living systems," Jaime Yassif, vice president of global biological policy and programs at the private, nonprofit Nuclear Threat Initiative, said in a public statement. "This is dramatically increasing the risk in ways that are really alarming."

In the past, creating a virus required a good deal of specialized expertise. Identifying a likely candidate would have taken extensive research. Synthesizing the genetic material would have required sophisticated knowledge and lab equipment. Stitching the genetic pieces together with the right chemicals to make it capable of infecting hosts and reproducing was yet another specialty.

Those steps are rapidly becoming available to lay people, including those with evil intent, Yassif said.

Benchtop DNA printers are now on the market; it's not clear that manufacturers, and the companies supplying genetic materials for printing, have proper screening protocols in place to validate their customers' bona fides. (See "Benchtop DNA Printers: A New Weapon of Terror?" 30 May 2023.)

Malefactors could print DNA segments, then send them to a contract lab for assembly or even set up a robotic lab of their own.

"The current default pathway will be for these tools to be widely disseminated and open source," Yassif noted. "We need better controls at all the chokepoints where we go from digital information to biological systems."

Esvelt has proposed that people training AI systems screen out the less than 1 percent of papers published on the Internet's Pubmed library of scientific papers that describe assembling genetic material into a pathogen.

However, at the moment, there are no mechanisms to tell AIs to ignore certain topics when they're engorging themselves on the Internet's ocean of information.

Before assigning the trial to his students, Esvelt did it himself to make sure it wouldn't yield truly dangerous results. He also ran the idea past other biosecurity experts to see if they agreed it was a safe task for students.

***TRENDPOST:*** *If AI can be used to create a bioweapon, it shouldn't be any more difficult to use to create other kinds of chemical weapons as well.*

*And if college students can do this, there is every reason to think that rogue governments – North Korea, for example – already have or soon will.*

**WALL STREET'S NEW WORRY ABOUT AI**

On 22 May, a fake photo created by an artificial intelligence (AI) showing an explosion at the Pentagon was posted on Twitter. The image immediately went viral.

Automated stock-trading programs sold off and markets plunged briefly, sending the Standard & Poor's 500 down 0.3 percent within minutes. Markets normalized shortly after the Pentagon announced that no explosion had happened.

Stock-trading algorithms, many now controlled by AI, had been snookered by AI.

The fake photo might have been just a prank—or it might have been someone who had sold short, then tricked the market into a sell-off and made a pile of money for a few minutes' work.

Regardless, among trading houses the experience sparked new worries.

Highly automated trading programs constantly scour the Internet for market-moving news and have gotten better at screening out false information.

However, "AI opens the door to all manner of mischief in the information environment which is becoming harder to manage," Doug Greenig, founder of the Florin Court Capital hedge fund, told the *Financial Times*.

Trading algorithms face two new challenges: phony stories or photos that fool a reputable reporter who repeats the information, and information that fools the trading algorithm itself, chief data scientist Peter Hafez at RavenPack, said to the *FT*.

The company uses AI to read data for financial firms.

AI might treat the reports as verified fact "and produce corresponding analytics," which would trigger trades based on false information, he explained.

The new kind of "info-threat" could drive trading firms to hire data companies to aggregate data and rate the likelihood that a piece of news is real.

"There's a huge tug-of-war going on between bulls and bears," Charles-Henry Monchau, chief investment officer at Syz Bank, said in an *FT* interview.

When trading algorithms see any sharp market move unexplained by market data, "they're going to react and force some selling, accelerating the move," he added.

“In a sense, it’s back to the past when we didn’t have accurate, fast news,” strategist Kit Juckes at Société Générale, said to the *FT*. “This is another step down the road to easy disinformation, made possible by technology and laziness.”

Traders do have some safeguards in place against market lurches.

Many algorithms trade market patterns that appear over longer periods than just moments. Traders routinely place a large number of small bets, which tends to even out any sudden market jolts. Also, many traders place “stop orders” that instantly sell when a stock they own falls by a relatively small percentage or dollar amount.

Still, “there will be more of these [Pentagon-type] stories for a long time and the perpetrators will attempt to extract value from the markets as a result,” Mike Zigmont, chief trader at Harvest Volatility Management, told the *FT*.

***TRENDPOST:*** *As we noted in “It’s Official: Social Media Is Now Worthless” (4 Apr 2023), some experts are urging AI programmers to embed watermarks or other IDs in their code so anything created by an AI will be automatically identified as such.*

*That could prevent AIs from being fooled by other AIs.*

*However, anyone with ill intent wouldn’t bother with a watermark or other ID.*

*It will take an indefinite period of time for AI experts to create a failsafe way to instantly identify something as artificially generated. Until then, no information or images you haven’t verified independently yourself should be trusted.*